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STATEMENT

by the Initiating Group of the Heads and Representatives of the Churches and Religious Associations in the Soviet Union

Prompted by the realization of the responsibility of our Churches and religious associations for the future of our country, we have now assembled in Moscow to discuss ways and means of serving, by believers, for the good of their peoples.

Today we are all participants in the hard but inevitable radical reorganization of life of our union state. The unity, which only outwardly and administratively cemented the country, making the peoples inhabiting it equal only in their lack of rights, is being replaced by the unity of sovereign republics. Under these conditions we feel obliged to search more vigorously not for external, but inner, spiritual and cultural union of our peoples. In our joint concern for their future we proceed from the recognition of the fact that for us the state is a natural community with the historically evolved spiritual, cultural, social and economic ties which should be duly used for the benefit of all peoples inhabiting it. In the history of these many-century relations the events of 1917 are not their beginning or end, but a definite stage in the historical existence of our country. We are convinced, nevertheless, that the political and ideological means, which our state was guided by in the post-revolutionary period, have become exhausted and cannot ensure a worthy historical perspective for our society.

Underlying the dialogue we are carrying on today is the understanding that the source of the troubles and tragedies we have experienced and continue to experience now lies not so much in external circumstances and forces as in ourselves, in our egoism, faintheartedness, lack of faith and love and in the weakening of the reverent attitude to the sacred gift of life, and that without an inner renewal we shall not achieve for all people a way of life worthy of man, and social peace.

Leaving political questions aside, we nevertheless declare that we are deeply concerned about our country's destiny. We see how the defects of our present-day political, economic and social reality upset the normal tenor of the life of people, often provoking outbursts of unworthy passions, feelings and actions. In particular, existing state system failed to take due account of national interests of our peoples and ethnic groups and the rights of citizens, and this impelled many to resort to actions which, as we testify, cannot be justified, if we proceed from the spiritual essence of our religious traditions.

Because of this we deem it necessary to combine the efforts towards an inner repentant reformation of man with the efforts to transform the social conditions of our life.

We repose hopes on such earliest renewal of



Address by His Holiness Patriarch Aleksy II to the participants in the meeting

the political, social and economic system of our society, under which no one will be ever able to build one's own prosperity on misfortune and hardships of other people and nations, and no people or ethnic group will capitalize on advantages over others, imposing its will on them.

The dialogue we are carrying on invites us to a thoughtful cooperation. In the past we also held meetings of the Heads of the Churches and religious associations in our country. These meetings, each in its specific historical conditions, provided us with their experience of mutual understanding and cooperation. At the same time we must admit with bitterness that we have not always acted in conditions of freedom.



During the meeting

But the present difficult situation in the country and the unseemly attempts to camouflage the inter-ethnic strife by religious ideas dictate us to resume our meetings, the meetings of religious leaders of our respective peoples.

Our current meeting is of an initiating character. We have become convinced that, despite all discord in the country, we, representatives of the spiritual traditions of our peoples, are able not only to conduct a dialogue, but also elaborate joint and, we hope, common positions with regard to the realities of the life of the state and society. We propose to meet again in the near future, on a broader basis, for a thorough and comprehensive discussion of everything that worries us in the life of society.

We hope that the new forces and movements coming out for the maintenance of our unity will play a more active role in the political life of the country, at a time of the confrontation of the forces seeking a split and the movements striving to preserve the former political system practically unchanged. On the basis of a free expression of the will of citizens at the on-coming referendum must determine the future

of our state system. We hope that the traditionally appealing position of believers will promote the renewal of the life of our state and society.

We believe that many of our fellow-countrymen will form the nucleus of these creative forces. As for our own stand, we want our country to retain its community but such that would be built on respect of human rights for all its citizens, on the recognition of the rights of peoples to self-determination and on the guarantee of the freedom which the human nature is endowed with from above.

We call upon all believers in our country to take an active part in building a worthy future for our state and by the word of reconciliation, addressed to those that are near and those that are far off, to promote the eradication of the spirit of intolerance and hatred in our life.

We believe that by combined efforts we shall be able to promote peace, accord and beneficial cooperation in our common law-governed democratic state which the entire world community of nations will look at with respect.

May peace and the blessing of the Most High abide in you, dear brothers and sisters, in this truly social and truly religious service of reconciliation.

From the All-Union Council of the Seventh-Day Adventists
M. KULAKOV, Chairman

From the Council of the Union of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists
Grigory KOMENDANT, Chairman

From the USSR Central Buddhist Board

Lama BAZARSAD, permanent representative of the CBB of the USSR

From the All-Union Council of Jewish Religious Organizations
Adolf Solomonovich SHAEVICH, Chief Rabbi of the Moscow Choral Synagogue

St. Daniel's Monastery, Moscow
March 13, 1991

From the Moslem Religious Board for the European Part of the USSR and Siberia

Mufti Talgat TADJUDDIN, Chairman

From the Moslem Religious Board for Central Asia and Kazakhstan
Mufti Muhammad-Sadyk ibn MUHAMMAD-Yusuf, Chairman

From the Russian Orthodox Church

ALEKSY, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia

FILARET, Metropolitan of Kiev and All the Ukraine

From the Russian Orthodox Old Believers' Church

ALIMPY, Metropolitan of Moscow and All Russia

From the Old Orthodox Christian Believers' Archbishopric
Novozybkov, Moscow and All Russia

GENNADY, Archbishop of Novozybkov, Moscow and All Russia

Reception by the President of the USSR

On March 13, 1991, at the request of the participants in the meeting of the Initiating Group of the Heads and Representatives of the Churches and Religious Associations in the USSR, they were received in the Kremlin by the President of the USSR Mikhail Gorbachev.



DECISIONS OF THE HOLY SYNOD

At its session on March 25, 1991, the Holy Synod, chaired by the PATRIARCH,

HEARD: the report by His Holiness Patriarch Aleksy II of Moscow and All Russia on the meeting of the Initiating Group of the Heads and Representatives of the Churches and Religious Associations of the Soviet Union, which took place in the residence of His Holiness the Patriarch and the Holy Synod at St. Daniel's Monastery, Moscow, on March 13, 1991, and on the reception of the participants in the meeting by the President of the USSR.

RESOLVED: 1) that satisfaction be expressed with the holding of the meeting of the Heads and Representatives of the Churches and Religious Associations who assembled to discuss ways and means of serving of worshippers for the good of our society;

2) that the Statement adopted by the Initiating Group at this meeting be approved and that the scope and the clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church be recommended to bring its content to the knowledge of all children of our Church (the text of the Statement is published in this issue);

3) that satisfaction be expressed with the reception of the meeting participants by Mikhail Gorbachev, President of the USSR, during which he informed them of the democratic reforms being implemented in the country, of the need for an alliance between believers and non-believers in the interests of peace, civil and national accord, and for the protection of the rights and freedoms of the citizens of the federation being renewed;

4) that particular satisfaction be expressed with the decision of the participants in the meeting to meet in the near future on a broader basis for a comprehensive discussion of the problems currently facing the Churches and religious organizations in the country;

5) that hope be expressed that the worshippers' conditionally appeasing position will promote the renewal of our society and state on the basis of maintaining the community which will be built on respect for human rights and the recognition of the right of all people to sovereignty and self-determination;

6) that noted be the traditional spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation which reigned at the meeting, and hope be expressed that this spirit of peace and accord will always be inherent in the mutual relations between representatives of all the Churches and religious associations in our country.

HEARD: the report by His Eminence Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk and Grodno, Patriarchal Exarch for All Byelorussia, Chairman of the Holy Synod Commission for Promoting the Efforts to Overcome the Consequences of the Chernobyl Atomic Power-plant Accident, on the Commission's sitting held in St. Daniel's Monastery, Moscow, on October 12, 1990.

RESOLVED: 1) that the report be acknowledged; 2) that the elaboration of general Church and diocesan programme of assistance to Chernobyl accident victims be authorized;

3) that the question of organization of a general Church Chernobyl Fund be submitted to a Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church for consideration;

4) that the Department for Church Charity and Social Service be entrusted with conducting the coordinating informational and practical activity aimed at assisting the Chernobyl tragedy victims.

HEARD: the report by His Eminence Metropolitan Yuvenaly of Krutitsy and Kolomna, Chairman of the Commission for Canonization of Saints, who submitted a historical study "On the Church's Attitude to the Feat of Martyrdom", compiled by the Commission, and the material pertaining to canonization of Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev and Galicia († 1918) and Metropolitan Veniamin of Petrograd and Gdov († 1922), as well as Archimandrite Sergy Shein, Yuri Novitsky and Ioann Kovsharov who were murdered together with them.

RESOLVED: 1) that the historical study of the Commission on Canonization of Saints, "On the Church's Attitude to the Feat of Martyrdom", be approved and assumed as a basis of approach to this issue in preparing canonization of the martyrs who suffered for the faith in the years of repressions in the 20th century;

2) that the Commission's proposal be approved on the resumption of the church remembrance of the martyrs who suffered for Christ's Faith, established by the 1917-1918 Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church on April 5/18, 1918.

Note: In its Decision "On Measures Resulting from the Persecution of the Russian Orthodox Church", the 1917-1918 Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church held on April 5/18, 1918, resolved: "To institute throughout Russia the annual church remembrance, on January 25 or on Sunday following this day, of all martyrs who died at this severe time of persecutions." January 25 was chosen for remembrance as the day of martyrdom of Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev;

3) that church remembrance of these martyrs be observed on January 25 (Old Style) if this day falls on Sunday, or on Sunday nearest to January 25;

4) that the proposal be approved of the Commission on Canonization of Saints concerning the institution of the day of church remembrance of new Russian martyrs and that it be submitted for final decision to the nearest Bishops' and Local Council;

5) that the texts of the lives and acts of Metropolitan Vladimir and Veniamin and those who suffered together with them, prepared by the Commission on Canonization of Saints, be approved;

6) that the historical study "On the Church's Attitude to the Feat of Martyrdom" and draft texts of the lives and acts relating to canonization of Metropolitans Vladimir and Veniamin and those who suffered together with them, prepared by the Commission on Canonization of Saints, be published; that reviews of these materials by archpastors, clergymen and laymen be sent to the Commission on Canonization of Saints; that the final judgement on these issues be made by the Holy Synod session devoted to the study of reviews in the Commission on Canonization of Saints with the results to be submitted to the nearest Bishops' Council;

7) that the study of the material on canonization of Grand Princess Yelizaveta Feodorovna († 1918) be carried on;

8) that diocesan hierarchs be entrusted with collecting information about the lives, service and martyrdom of those archpastors, clergymen and laymen within their respective dioceses who died as martyrs for Christ and in the Orthodox faith; that this material be forwarded to the Synodal Commission on Canonization of Saints for study and prospective canonization of these Russian martyrs who suffered in the 20th century.

HEARD: the report by His Eminence Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, Head of the Department for External Church Relations, on the Second Meeting of the Joint Coordinating Commission on Cooperation Between the Church of England and the Russian Orthodox Church, held in the Rukhtitsa Convent of the Dormition on January 25-27, 1991, and on the participation in it by Hegumen Ioann Ekonomtsev, Deputy Head of the Department for External Church Relations (now Head of the Department for Religious Education and Catechization), and V. Chukalov, staff member of the Department.

RESOLVED: 1) that the report be acknowledged; 2) that satisfaction be expressed with the holding of the Second Meeting of the Joint Coordinating Commission within the precincts of the Russian Orthodox Church;

3) that the proposals by the Joint Commission for the further bilateral exchange between the two Churches be approved and that hope be expressed for their successful implementation.

HEARD: the report by His Eminence Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, Head of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, who headed the delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church at the 7th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (Canberra, Australia, February 7-20, 1991), on the work of the Assembly and its results.

RESOLVED: 1) that the report be acknowledged; 2) that the position adopted by the delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church at the Assembly be approved;

3) that support be expressed for the basic propositions of the Statement made at the Assembly by the

Orthodox participants and that the inter-Orthodox cooperation evinced in the drafting of this Statement be positively appraised;

4) that the Holy Synod Commission on Christian Unity be charged with a further study of the Assembly's results and the Statement made at the Assembly by the Orthodox participants so that recommendations could be presented to the Holy Synod for the adoption of a Synodal decision on the official position of the Moscow Patriarchate with regard to the Assembly's results and the question of the Russian Orthodox Church's further participation in the World Council of Churches;

5) that acknowledged be the Assembly's election of the following representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church to the new Central Committee of the World Council of Churches:

His Eminence Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, Head of the Department for External Church Relations; Archpriest Viktor Petlyuchenko of the Odessa Diocese, teacher at the Odessa Theological Seminary—as a representative from the Ukrainian Orthodox Church; Deacon Georgy Avvakumov, staff member of the Department for External Church Relations, lecturer at the Leningrad Theological Academy; Dr. A. Buyevsky, Executive Secretary of the Department for External Church Relations; O. Ganba, staff member of the Department for External Church Relations; M. Nelyubova, staff member of the Department for External Church Relations.

HEARD: the draft civil Statutes presented by His Eminence Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, Head of the Department for External Church Relations, Chairman of the Holy Synod Commission for Drafting Amendments to the Statute of the Russian Orthodox Church, in connection with the new USSR Law "On Freedom of Conscience and on Religious Organizations":

1) "Dioceses of the Russian Orthodox Church (the Moscow Patriarchate)";

2) "Monasteries and Convents of the Russian Orthodox Church".

These draft Statutes have been prepared for their consideration and approved by the Holy Synod and are to be submitted to civil institutions for registration so that dioceses, monasteries, convents and theological academies of the Russian Orthodox Church may obtain the status of legal entity.

RESOLVED: that the civil Statutes: "Dioceses of the Russian Orthodox Church (the Moscow Patriarchate)" and "Monasteries and Convents of the Russian Orthodox Church", with the additions introduced by the Holy Synod, be approved.

HEARD: the request to His Holiness by His Grace dismissed Bishop Ilian, which says:

"In accordance with the decision of Your Holiness and the Holy Synod of January 30, 1991 I hereby respectfully inform you that, upon sober

consideration, I admit the tactlessness, both in form and in content, of the telegram I sent to the Presidium of the 4th Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR. I sent this telegram in a state of psychological and emotional stress, caused by my dismissal, although, I realize, this does not justify my ill-considered actions.

"Setting hopes on Your paternal mercy, I humbly request You to enable me to continue my hierarchal service to the Holy Church and to decide on my obedience at Your kindly Patriarchal consideration.

"Beseeching Your holy prayers and primatial blessing."

RESOLVED: that, taking into consideration the explanation given by His Grace Ilian, he be appointed Bishop of Serpukhov, Vicar of the Moscow Diocese, Dean of the Metochion of the Russian Orthodox Church in Karlovy Vary (Czechoslovakia);

that the appropriate ukase be issued.

HEARD: the report by His Eminence Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, Head of the Department for External Church Relations, on the Berlin Diocese:

RESOLVED: 1) that Archpriest Aleksy Parfyonov be relieved of his duties as rector of the Church of St. Mary Magdalene in connection with the expiration of the term of his mission and that he be placed at the disposal of His Eminence Metropolitan Gedeon of Stavropol and Baku;

2) that priest Anatoly Rodionov of the Moscow Diocese be appointed rector of the Church of St. Mary Magdalene in Weimar.

3) that Archpriest Feodor Povnoi be relieved of his duties as rector of the St. Alexy Church-Memorial of Russian Glory in Leipzig in connection with the expiration of the term of his mission and that he be placed at the disposal of His Eminence Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk and Grodno, Patriarchal Exarch to All Byelorussia;

4) that priest Nikolai Orlov, staff member of the Department for External Church Relations, be appointed rector of the St. Alexy Church-Memorial of Russian Glory in Leipzig.

HEARD: the report by His Eminence Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, Head of the Department for External Church Relations, on the Moscow Patriarchate's representation at the World Council of Churches in Geneva (Switzerland).

RESOLVED: that Archpriest Georgy Goncharov be appointed to the now vacant post of representative of the Moscow Patriarchate at the World Council of Churches in Geneva (Switzerland) and be relieved of his duties as the representative of the Moscow Patriarchate at the Christian Peace Conference in Prague (CSFR).

HEARD: the report by His Grace Archbishop Amvrosy of Ivanovo and Kineshma on the opening of a convent in the city of Ivanovo.

RESOLVED: that the opening of a convent in the city of Ivanovo be blessed.

HEARD: the report by His Grace Bishop Aleksandr of Kostroma and Galich on the transfer to the Church of the Gorodetsky Monastery of St. Avraamy in the village of Nozhkino, Chukhloma District, Kostroma Region.

RESOLVED: that the opening of the Gorodetsky Monastery of St. Avraamy in the village of Nozhkino, Kostroma Diocese, be blessed.

HEARD: the report by His Eminence Metropolitan Ioann of Leningrad and Ladoga on the opening in the Leningrad Diocese of the Konevets Monastery of the Nativity of the Mother of God.

RESOLVED: 1) that the opening of the Konevets Monastery of the Nativity of the Mother of God in the Leningrad Diocese be blessed;

2) that Archimandrite Nazary Lavrinenko be approved as the Father Superior of the Konevets Monastery of the Nativity of the Mother of God.

HEARD: the report by His Eminence Metropolitan Yuvenaly of Krutitsy and Kolomna on the transfer to the Moscow Diocese of the Vysotsky Monastery in the town of Serpukhov and his request to approve Archimandrite Iosif Balabanov as its Father Superior.

RESOLVED: 1) that the opening of the Vysotsky Monastery in the town of Serpukhov, Moscow Diocese, be blessed;

2) that Archimandrite Iosif Balabanov be approved as Father Superior of the Vysotsky Monastery in the town of Serpukhov.

HEARD: the report by His Eminence Metropolitan Yuvenaly of Krutitsy and Kolomna on the transfer to the Moscow Diocese of the Bobrenevo Monastery in the village of Staroye Bobrenevo, Kolomna District, Moscow Region.

RESOLVED: that the opening of the Bobrenevo Monastery in the village of Bobrenevo, Kolomna District, Moscow Region, be blessed.

HEARD: the report by His Eminence Metropolitan Nikolai of Nizhni Novgorod and Arzamas on the transfer to the Nizhni Novgorod Diocese of the Holy Trinity Convent in the township of Makaryevo.

RESOLVED: that the opening of the Makaryevo Convent of the Holy Trinity in the Nizhni Novgorod Diocese be blessed.

HEARD: the report by His Grace Bishop Varsonofy of Saransk and Mordovia on the opening of the Sanaksar Monastery of the Nativity of the Mother of God in the town of Temnikov.

RESOLVED: 1) that the opening of the Sanaksar Monastery of the Nativity of the Mother of God be blessed;

2) that Archimandrite Varnava Safonov be approved as the Father Superior of the Sanaksar Monastery of the Nativity of the Mother of God.

HEARD: the report by His Grace Archbishop Varnava of Cheboksary and Chuvashia on the opening of the Convent of the Transfiguration of the Saviour in the city of Cheboksary.

RESOLVED: that the opening of the Convent of the Transfiguration of the Saviour in the city of Cheboksary be blessed.

CONSIDERED: the filling of the newly formed Magadan See.

RESOLVED: that Archimandrite Arkady Afonin of the Kaluga Diocese be made Bishop of Magadan and Kamchatka, with his episcopal nomination and consecration to take place in Moscow;
that the appropriate ukase be issued.

HEARD: the report by His Eminence Metropolitan Nikolai of Nizhni Novgorod and Arzamas on the results of the work of the Commission for Investigation of Complaints Against His Grace Bishop Gavriil Steblyuchenko of Khabarovsk and Blagoveshchensk.

Note: The Commission formed by the Holy Synod (reg. No. 39 of the Holy Synod session of January 31, 1990), comprising: His Eminence Metropolitan Nikolai of Nizhni Novgorod and Arzamas, His Grace Archbishop Melkhisedek of Sverdlovsk and Kurgan, and His Grace Archbishop Yevgeny of Tambov and Michurinsk, went to Khabarovsk, Ussuriisk and Vladivostok and from February 28 to March 5, 1991, made an on-the-spot investigation.

Acting as a church court, in accordance with the Statute of the Russian Orthodox Church (1, 8; V, 32-a), the Holy Synod summoned His Grace Bishop Gavriil to its session of March 25, 1991, and heard his explanations on all the points of the charges against him.

As a result, the Synod agreed with the conclusions made by the Commission and found His Grace Bishop Gavriil guilty of:

violation of the hierarchal oath in that he accepted a forbidden cleric from another diocese and gave him the right to conduct services (Ap. 16), violation of ecclesiastical peace and an unworthy, despotic treatment of the clergy and laymen (Ap. 27, 'Quinisext' Council, 9), lack of concern for the proper organization of diocesan and parish life (Ap. 36), exceeding the authority of a ruling hierarch, which was expressed in granting patriarchal awards to his clergy, the conduct discrediting the lofty title of bishop.

In keeping with the canonical rules, His Grace Gavriil is to be deprived of the episcopal dignity.

Hoping for his repentance and reformation, the Holy Synod

RESOLVED: 1) that His Grace Bishop Gavriil be discharged;

2) that he be prohibited to conduct divine services for three years;

3) that he be sent for prayer and repentance to the Pskov-Pechery Monastery of the Dormition under spiritual observation of the ruling hierarch, His Grace Archbishop Vladimir of Pskov and Velikie Luki, the Holy Archimandrite of the Pskov-Pechery Monastery;

4) that, upon the expiration of the three-year

term, if he repents and reforms, his further church service be decided;

that the appropriate ukase be issued.

CONSIDERED: provision of pensions to and social protection of the clergy and persons working in the Russian Orthodox Church.

RESOLVED: 1) that a Holy Synod Commission be formed on questions of pensions to and social protection of those working in the Russian Orthodox Church;

2) that His Grace Archbishop Yevgeny of Tambov and Michurinsk be appointed Chairman of the Commission;

3) that the Chairman of the Commission submit to the next Holy Synod session the Commission composition and proposals for altering the system of pensions to and social protection of persons working in the Russian Orthodox Church.

HEARD: the report by His Eminence Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk and Grodno, Patriarchal Exarch to All Byelorussia, Chairman of the Holy Synod Commission for Promoting the Efforts to Eliminate Consequences of the Chernobyl Atomic Power Plant Accident on the trip he and His Grace Bishop Aristarkh of Gomel and Mozyr made to the USA as members of a delegation of the Soviet Peace Fund, on the invitation of the First Presbyterian Church of the State of Virginia, between February 26 and March 13, 1991 for the purpose of informing the American Christian public of the consequences of the Chernobyl Atomic Power Plant accident and concluding agreements of comprehensive assistance to the afflicted population of Byelorussian districts.

RESOLVED: 1) that the report be acknowledged

2) that gratitude be expressed to the leadership of the First Presbyterian Church of the State of Virginia (USA) for the hospitality and attention accorded to the representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church

*ALEKSY, Patriarch of Moscow
and All Russia*

MEMBERS OF THE HOLY SYNOD:

FILARET, Metropolitan of Kiev and All the Ukraine

FILARET, Metropolitan of Minsk and Grodno, Patriarchal Exarch to All Byelorussia

IOANN, Metropolitan of Leningrad and Ladoga

YUVENALY, Metropolitan of Krutitsy and Kolomna

KIRILL, Metropolitan of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, Head of the Department for External Church Relations

NIKOLAI, Metropolitan of Nizhni Novgorod and Arzamas

VLADIMIR, Archbishop of Tashkent and Central Asia

YEVGENY, Archbishop of Tambov and Michurinsk

VLADIMIR, Archbishop of Kishinev and Moldavia

PANTELEIMON, Bishop of Arkhangelsk and Murmansk

ALEKSANDR, Bishop of Kostroma and Galich

*VLADIMIR, Metropolitan of Rostov and Novocherkassk
Chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate*

Message of His Holiness Patriarch ALEKSY II to the Faithful of Georgia

On February 20, 1991, the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church, His Holiness Patriarch Aleksey II of Moscow and All Russia, addressed the following letter to His Holiness and Beatitude Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia, Iliya II, with an appeal to the faithful of the republic.

"Your Holiness and Beatitude, in these early days of salvific Lent I turn to Your Holiness with brotherly greetings on the arrival of Holy Quadragesima. And according to the Orthodox Tradition, I ask, first of all, for your forgiveness if in the past year I have sinned against you by word, deed or thought.

"I ask for your forgiveness, however, not only by virtue of tradition, but because I feel it necessary to transgress the bounds of the canonic law. In these days I consider it necessary to address the flock, not of my, but of your Church. I am induced to do so by the sad news coming from South Ossetia.

"Dear brothers and sisters, the first days of Lent are for all Christians a time of special spiritual vigilance and soberness, a time of special concern for defining genuine motives for one or another action and, accordingly, of its evaluation. It is a time of repentance, when a person faced with his misfortunes and adversities, endeavours, despite his habits, to find fault in himself and not in outward 'causes' and 'reasons'.

"Therefore, believing that the people of Georgia are Christians not in name alone but in spirit, I hope that my words will be received with greater understanding in these days especially.

"The same Blood, the Blood of Christ, given to us by our Lord in Holy Communion, flows in me and in you. Only administrative and government structures isolate the Russian and Georgian Orthodox Churches, but they are, of course, more than Sisters—they are one in the integral organism of the Universal Church of Christ.

"In these days when people are ready to shed blood on the land they quarrel over, may the Word of God, which the incessant rustling of newspaper pages often prevents us from hearing, remind us that we are only strangers on Earth, and that our path lies to Eternal God and is entirely like Pascha in its Hebrew sense of the swift passover. *For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come* (Heb. 13.14).

"The Earth has been entrusted to us by the Creator. And we shall have to give an answer as to how we had used the talent given to us. Shall we say: 'O Lord, we loved this earth, and living on it we glorified Thee, its Creator; we grew vine and wheat on it, and offered wine and bread upon Thine Altar, in order that Thou mightest communicate us to thee through these most simple earthly gifts.' Or shall we say: 'O Lord, we loved this earth so much that we killed and chased everyone who, apart from us, wanted to call it his own...'

"There is an old legend which says that a certain monk censured his brother. Some time later the one censured died. Afterwards, the one who had censured had a vision in which before him stood an Angel with the soul of the departed brother and said: 'Behold, thou took upon thyself to judge him. Well, let it be as thou didst judge. Now say: does he merit eternal perdition? But remember that as soon as thou decidest it shall be fulfilled.' The man who had so lightly judged in human affairs, in horror refused to pass the final judgement...

"I would like to ask any man, of whatever nationality: Here, in the presence of Christ, you meet a man whom you consider your enemy and the enemy of your land and people. And there, will you be able, in the presence of Christ, to repeat your judgement and say: 'Inasmuch as he impedes my life may he be condemned to death'? Sly and unrighteous is any judgement which is passed and justified, hiding from God's presence (Gen. 3.8).

"One Moscow priest, who had died several years ago, in answer to the question, what must we not eat during fast?, said: 'Do not eat up men...' How can one enter Lent, approach Christ's Chalice, being violent justifying violence? And violence is now being committed in South Ossetia, in the streets of Tskhinvali.

"Iberia is the land of the Mother of God. How can She bless those who are blockading and depriving of necessities thousands in the city which is populated by Orthodox Christians at that.

"Your Holiness! You know better the peoples of your Church, their souls and character, you will find better words to explain that the Christian Faith does not give any right to hate anyone on 'legal' grounds.

"And even if we, with our pastoral word, cannot prevent bloodshed, by raising our voices against it, we, at any rate, will avoid another sin—we shall not give the enemies of Orthodoxy cause to say that our national Churches cannot rise above nationalism. Indeed, it is wrong, according to the wise word of the Apostle, that *the name of God be blasphemed* (Rom. 2.24) through the sins and weaknesses of the believers.

"I remain Your Holiness' sincerely loving brother, always praying for you and asking for your prayers,

ALEKSY, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia"

(Izvestia, February 22, 1991)

Services Conducted by His Holiness Patriarch ALEKSY II

On February 24, 1991, First Sunday in Lent, the Triumph of Orthodoxy, His Holiness the Patriarch celebrated Divine Liturgy in the Patriarchal Cathedral of the Epiphany. His concelebrants were Metropolitan Yuvnaly of Krutitsy and Kolomna and Pitirim of Volokolamsk and Yuriev, Archbishops Varnava of Cheboksary and Chuvashia, Valentin of Korsun, Bishops Niphon of Philippopolis (Antiochene Patriarchate), Antony of Krasnoyarsk and Eniseisk, Arseny of Istra, Viktor of Podolsk, Elevfery of Chimkent and Tselinograd. After the Liturgy a moleben of the Sunday of Orthodoxy was conducted, prior to which His Holiness the Patriarch delivered an oration (see above).

When the divine service was over, His Holiness, the concelebrating hierarchs and clergymen venerated at the icons of the Saviour and the Mother of God, which on that day are placed in the middle of the church as a token of the inviolability of the veneration of icons in the Orthodox Church, then at the reliquaries of St. Aleksey and St. Serafim of Sarov and at the particularly venerated Kazan Icon of the Mother of God.

On March 3, Second Sunday in Lent, His Holiness the Patriarch celebrated Divine Liturgy in the Patriarchal Cathedral of the Epiphany and, on the eve, officiated at All-Night Vigil, assisted by Archbishops Isidor of Krasnodar and Kuban, Valentin of Korsun, Sergy of Solnechnogorsk, Bishops Arseny of Istra and Viktor of Podolsk. In the evening His Holiness conducted the Office of Passion in the Epiphany Cathedral, assisted by the hierarchs who had taken part in the Liturgy.

On March 6, in the Church of the Resurrection in Sokolniki, His Holiness the Patriarch celebrated the Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts and conducted a moleben in front of the miracle-working Iberian Icon of the Mother of God. After the divine service His Holiness delivered an oration, in which he pointed out that Lent is a time salvific for the soul. Fathers of the Church call it the time of spiritual spring. Just as Nature revives in spring so the soul of every man should arouse under the influence of the grace of the Holy Spirit. During Lent the divine service is entirely aimed at moving the soul, arousing it from the sinful slumber, calling it to repentance, to following the Lord. For some this fast may be the last one, for

nobody knows when the Lord will call us to Him. Therefore the time of repentance should not be postponed for a long time, and one should respond to the call of the Church, urging every one of us to repent.

On March 9, the day of the First and Second Invention of the Head of St. John the Forerunner, His Holiness the Patriarch celebrated Divine Liturgy in the Church of St. John the Forerunner in Moscow, assisted by Bishops Arseny of Istra and Viktor of Podolsk.

On March 10, Third Sunday in Lent, of the Veneration of the Holy Cross, His Holiness the Patriarch celebrated Divine Liturgy in the Patriarchal Cathedral of the Epiphany and, on the eve, officiated at All-Night Vigil, assisted by Bishops Arseny of Istra and Viktor of Podolsk. That same day His Holiness conducted the Office of Passion in the Moscow Church of St. John the Warrior, the Great Martyr, assisted by Archbishop Valentin of Korsun and Bishops Arseny of Istra and Viktor of Podolsk.

On March 12, His Holiness the Patriarch visited the New Monastery of the Saviour turned over to the Church by the state. The Patriarch was accompanied by Bishop Arseny of Istra. In the monastery His Holiness was welcomed by Bishop Viktor of Podolsk and Archimandrite Aleksey Frolov, Father Superior of the cloister.

On March 15, in the Church of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God in Kolomenskoye, a district of Moscow, His Holiness the Patriarch, assisted by Bishop Arseny of Istra, celebrated the Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts and conducted a moleben in front of the miracle-working Icon of the Mother of God the 'Reigning'. During the divine service a deaconic ordination took place. After the moleben Archpriest Svyatoslav Yurimsky, rector of the church, delivered a welcoming address to the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church. Speaking in reply, His Holiness said:

"Thank you, Father Rector, for the words of greeting and the sacred document you have presented to me—the address by St. Tikhon, Patriarch of All Russia to the Moscow clergy. During the primacy of His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon, the miracle-working Icon of the Mother of God the 'Reigning' was invented, and recently we have witnessed its second invention.

In the difficult periods of history the Lord sends us spiritual joys and shrines to console, encourage and strengthen us spiritually.

"We have always called our Motherland the abode of the Queen of Heaven. Just think of the number of churches erected in Her honour in Russia, and the number of holy, much-venerated miracle-working icons of the Mother of God that have appeared in the Russian land! We should repose our hopes in Her grace-filled intercession. We believe that the Queen of Heaven will protect our Motherland and return the spirit of brotherly love and tolerance to the people of our land!"

On March 17, Fourth Sunday in Lent, His Holiness the Patriarch celebrated Divine Liturgy in the Holy Trinity Cathedral of St. Daniel's Monastery and, on the eve, officiated at All-Night Vigil, assisted by Metropolitan Irinei of Vienna and Austria, Archbishops Herman of Volgograd and Kamyshin, Nikolai of Vladivostok and Primorski Krai (concelebrated only during the Liturgy), Bishops Arseny of Istra, Viktor of Podolsk, Manuil of Petrozavodsk and Olonets, Vikenty of Bendery, and Dimitry of Tobolsk and

Tyumen. During the divine service ordinations of deacon and presbyter took place. Following the Liturgy a moleben was conducted to Prince St. Daniil of Moscow, after which His Holiness delivered an oration in which he said in part: "In today's Gospel lesson we heard about the father of a son, who had a dumb spirit, and entreated the Lord to heal his child. Jesus Christ said unto him: *If thou canst believe all things are possible to him that believeth*; And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, *Lord I believe; help thou mine unbelief* (Mk. 9. 23-24). I think that in our life we should be guided by these Gospel words. Today the word often does not reach human hearts. By the example of our life we should preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, and call people to Christ, multiplying Christ's love."

On the evening of the same day His Holiness conducted the Office of Passion in the Trinity-St. Sergy Lavra. On March 18, His Holiness the Patriarch met with teachers and students of the Moscow theological schools.

Name Day of His Holiness Patriarch ALEKSY II

On February 25, the Feast of St. Aleksy of Moscow, the Russian Orthodox Church marked with prayers the name-day of her Primate. The All-Night Vigil in the Patriarchal Cathedral of the Epiphany, on the eve of the feast, was led by His Holiness Patriarch Aleksy II of Moscow and All Russia. Officiating with him were Metropolitans — Yuvenaly of Krutitsy and Kolomna, Pitirim of Volokolamsk and Yuriev, Agafangel of Vinnitsa and Bratslav, Mefody of Voronezh and Lipetsk; Archbishops—Varnava of Cheboksary and Chuvashia, Valentin of Korsun, Bishops—Amvrosy of Ivanovo and Kineshma (now Archbishop), Niphon of Philippopolis (representative of the Patriarch of Antioch to the Patriarch of Moscow), Paisy of Orel and Bryansk, Grigory of Mozhaish, Arseny of Istra, Viktor of Podolsk and Elevfery of Chimbkent and Tselinograd.

On the feast day itself, Monday of the second week in Lent,

His Holiness Patriarch Aleksy celebrated the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts in the Epiphany Cathedral. His concelebrants were Metropolitans—Filaret of Minsk and Grodno, Patriarchal Exarch to All Byelorussia; Ioann of Leninograd and Ladoga; Yuvenaly of Krutitsy and Kolomna; Vladimir of Rostov and Novocherkassk; Pitirim of Volokolamsk and Yuriev; Agafangel of Vinnitsa and Bratslav; Mefody of Voronezh and Lipetsk; Archbishops—Nikolai of Nizhni Novgorod and Arzamas (now Metropolitan); Varnava of Cheboksary and Chuvashia; Kliment of Kaluga and Borovsk; Sergy of Solnechnogorsk; Valentin of Korsun; Nikolai of Vladivostok and Primorsk; Aleksy of Alma-Ata and Karaganda; Bishops Amvrosy of Ivanovo and Kineshma; Niphon of Philippopolis (Antiochene Patriarchate); Elevsevy of Samara and Syzran (now Archbishop); Feofan of Kashira, a. i. of Berlin and Leipzig; Panteleimon of Arkhangelsk and Mur-

mansk; Evgeny of Tambov and Michurinsk (now Archbishop); Antony of Krasnoyarsk and Eniseisk; Aristarkh of Gomel and Mozyr; Arseny of Istra; Viktor of Podolsk; Evlogy of Vladimir and Suzdal; and Elevfery of Chimbkent and Tselinograd. Attending the service in the sanctuary were Archbishop Aleksandr of Dmitrov, Bishop Aleksandr of Kostroma and Galich; and Bishop Filaret of Astrakhan and Enotaevka. Present in the cathedral during the service were S. Stankevich, Vice-Chairman of the Moscow Soviet, and Yu. Luzhkov, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Moscow Soviet.

After the Liturgy a moleben was said to St. Aleksy of Moscow then Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk and Grodno delivered an address of greeting on behalf of the Holy Synod to His Holiness the Patriarch. He said among other things:

"Most Holy Vladyka and Father, bless us to add to the glo-

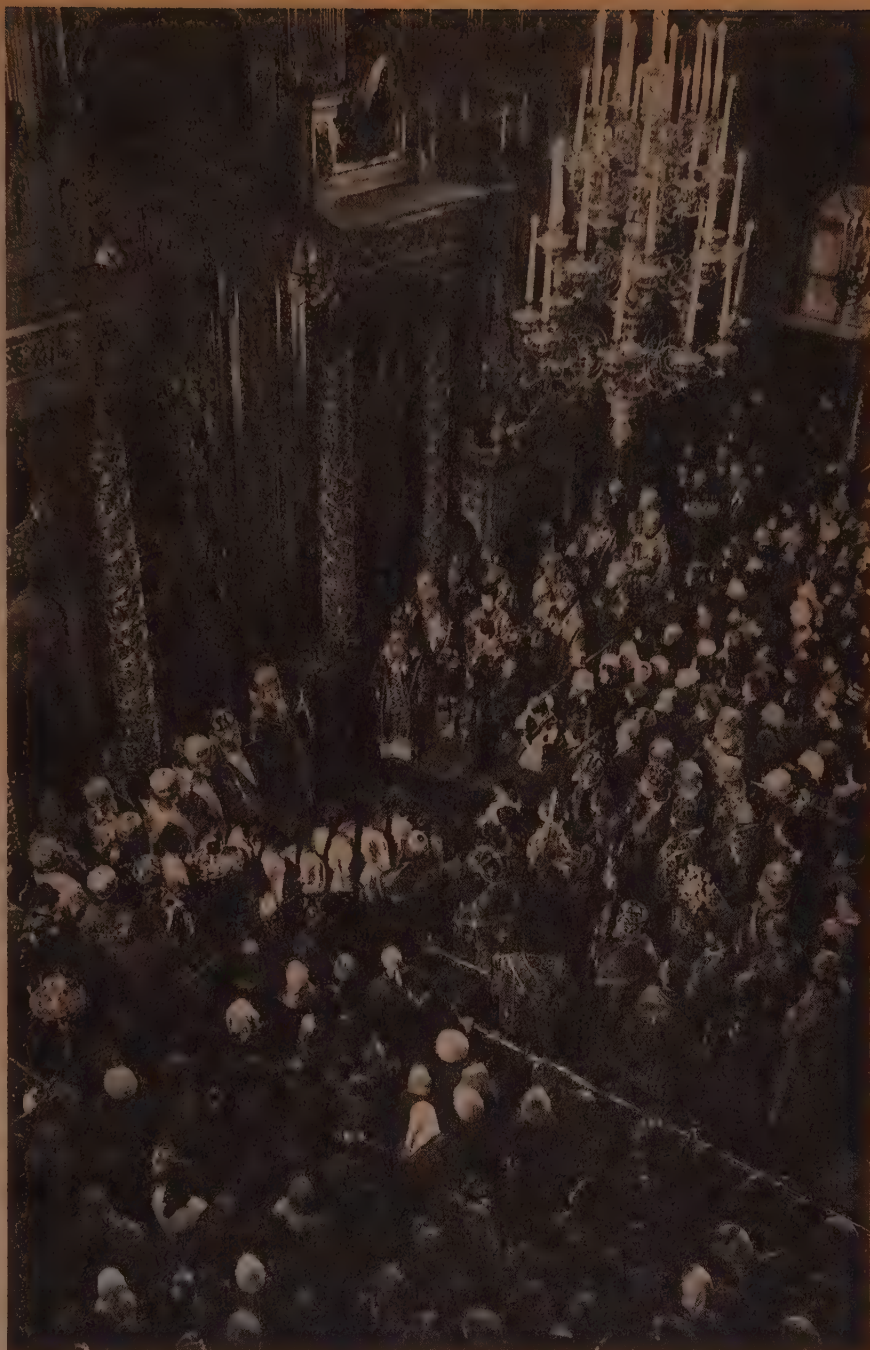
rification of God and His servant St. Aleksey our sincere and filial greeting and congratulate you on your name-day on behalf of the Holy Synod of our Holy Church, the pastors, synodal institutions, theological schools, the holy monasteries and convents, which are increasing from day to day to our joy, and the people of God gathered in multitude in your cathedral church. At this hour in all the churches throughout Russia prayers are being offered up so that the Lord of our Heavenly Father may bless you on the patriarchal path of service of the Mother Church. We pray that the Lord may strengthen you constantly and bless your patriarchal ministry for the good estate of our Holy Church, our Motherland and its peoples. Today when people are turning to the Church with awe your word calling them to peace, brotherhood, and cooperation is needed as never before, and may it be indeed blessed by God."

Metropolitan Filaret presented His Holiness with an icon of St. Aleksey for prayerful memory.

A congratulating address on behalf of the clergy was delivered by Archpriest Prokopy, Rector of the Church of the Resurrection in Sokolniki. He said among other things:

"Your Holiness, on the Feast of St. Aleksey of Moscow, whose name you providentially bear, we mentally turn our gaze to the times of the primatial ministry of your heavenly patron and predecessor on the Moscow See. The image of St. Aleksey the organizer of church and state life is impressed upon the tablets of our hearts."

"For the sake of peace and tranquility he sent to Nizhni Novgorod St. Sergy the Hegumen of Radonezh. With the help of St. Sergy, St. Aleksey was able to unite Russia and prepare her for victory on the Kulikovo Plain.



Two years after the death of the saint, Russia arose and gradually began freeing herself from the Mongol-Tartar yoke.

"Just as in the days of St. Aleksey the people are turning to the Church with hope, believing that she will regenerate spiritual and moral values and lead the nation out of the condition of crisis and fear. Every day brings you fresh

cares, your patriarchal heart is filled with pain because of unease in the Church today. The schism which has arisen in the Ukraine, the claims of the Russian Church Abroad, and mostly unobjective criticism of the Church by the mass media—all of this causes pain to your heart. But the Lord gives you strength and courage to overcome everything through



Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk and Grodno, Patriarchal Exarch to All Byelorussia, congratulating His Holiness on his Name Day

our Lord Jesus Who strengthens you.

"Your primatial ministry began with the canonization of St. Ioann of Kronshtadt. Not long ago the second invention of the relics of St. Serafim took place. I think, just as St. Sergy was a champion of St. Aleksy so the Lord has granted you the intercessor St. Serafim who in his exhortations called upon all the people to attain the spirit of peace, brotherly love, and charity.

"On behalf of the clergy and flock of Moscow and of the city of St. Peter, allow us, Your Holiness, to congratulate you on your name-day and present to you this amber crozier."

Then the children of the Sunday school, attached to the Epiphany Patriarchal Cathedral, presented His Holiness with flowers and congratulated Patriarch Aleksy on his name-day.

In response His Holiness the Patriarch said:

"My cordial thanks for the heartfelt addresses delivered by Metropolitan Filaret and Archpriest Prokopy on behalf of the

Moscow and St. Petersburg clergy, and by the youthful voices of those who will take our places in the ministry.

"My heartfelt thanks to all of you for your congratulations, participation in the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, and for the common prayer offered with 'one mouth and one heart'. Prayer is our support and buttress in life and in our ministry. It will give us strength to bear difficulties, sorrows, and trials.

"The Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church elected my humbleness to the primatial

throne of the patriarchs of Moscow and All Russia, and placed upon me the heavy cross of patriarchal ministry. I put my trust in the prayers of my brother archpastors and of the clergy and in the prayers of the flock of all Russia so that we may, with honour and dignity, carry out our ministry and respond to the hopes set upon us by believers and non-believers, people interested in the life of the Church, people who want to comprehend the historical and spiritual traditions of the nation and bring them back to the life of society. These hopes must justify through our service of God and the Holy Church of Christ, introducing peace, tranquility, tolerance, and the love of Christ into the life of people together with whom we are treading the road of life. By this we shall fulfil the behest of Christ the Saviour and justify the ministry to which we have been called. In my ministry I put my trust in the almighty help of God so that together with St. Paul I may say: *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me*



Schoolgirls of the Sunday school at the Epiphany Cathedral congratulating His Holiness the Patriarch on his Name Day

During the service in the Epiphany Cathedral: Yu. Luzhkov, Chairman of the Moscow City Soviet Executive Committee (in the centre), S. Stankevich, Deputy Chairman of the Moscow City Soviet (second from the left.)



(Phil. 4.13) Trusting in the prayerful help and intercession of the Most Pure Theotokos Whose Iberian icon we are commemorating today, of St. Aleksey of Moscow, St. Sergy of Radonezh, and St. Serafim of Sarov, who in times of hardship in the life of our country and Church were succourers and intercessors for the land of Russia, we believe that today too they are praying and succouring our Holy Church and the peoples of our land.

"I prayerfully wish all the archpastors and pastors to justify the hopes placed in them by society. Many are looking with hope to the Church and her servants today. In our Sunday schools, whose number is increasing, the children are learning the fundamentals of spirituality and morality lovingly and willingly. We trust that the generation which grows up in Sunday schools from an early age will be well grounded in faith, piety and morality, that it will not be lost and that it will bring the goodness and righteousness of God into the world."

"The dearest gift today has been our prayerful communion. Once again I thank the archpastors, pastors, and the people of God. May the Lord save you for this prayer."

* * *

After the divine service His Holiness Patriarch Aleksey gave a reception in the patriarchal chambers at the cathedral church. During the reception the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church

was warmly congratulated by the eminent hierarchs of our Church, the representatives of Local Orthodox Churches, and the employees of synodal institutions. In his speech of greeting Yu. Luzhkov, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Moscow City Soviet of People's Deputies, stressed in particular the creative role which in these hard times the Russian Church plays in the work of regenerating the Motherland. Then the children of the Sunday schools gave a short concert.

His Holiness thanked the speakers for their congratulations and then proclaimed the elevation of Archbishop Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad and Archbishop Nikolai of Nizhni Novgorod and Arzamas to the dignity of metropolitan; Bishops Evsey of Samara and Syzran, Vladimir of Tashkent and Central Asia, Evgeny of Tambov and Michurinsk, and Amvrosy of Ivanovo and Kineshma to the dignity of archbishop.

"At this crucial moment in the history of the Church and our Motherland," His Holiness Patriarch Aleksey said in conclusion, "we must overcome the inertia of decades of passivity when we

used to live as prompted to. Now we must act as our conscience tells us, as life itself dictates. To live and act is the duty of archpastors, pastors and workers of the Church.

"Today there are many problems facing us and demanding urgent solutions. Thousands of churches stand roofless and the premises given to Sunday schools are most inconvenient. Many today need our help. There are many lonely, sick and helpless people we must aid giving humane support, not only material but also spiritual, in their life, in their difficulties. And if we fulfil these tasks moved not by order but by the call of our conscience, they will bring us spiritual satisfaction and give us fresh strength."

"I cordially thank you for the kind words, spoken by those present here and all who have honoured me on the feast of my heavenly patron. I know that much of what has been said in advance I must yet justify by my activities. I rely on the help of archpastors, pastors, monks and nuns, our pious laity and the growing generation. Only by common effort can we implement everything incumbent on us as our duty and calling."

Archimandrite NIFONT Solodukha Nominated and Consecrated Bishop of Khmelnytsky and Kamenets-Podolsky

By decision of the Holy Synod on March 20, 1990, Archimandrite Nifont Solodukha of the Volyn Diocese was designated Bishop of Khmelnytsky and Kamenets-Podolsky.

The nomination of Archimandrite Nifont as Bishop of Khmelnytsky and Kamenets-Podolsky was held on March 30, 1990, after All-Night Vigil in Kiev's Cathedral of St. Vladimir by Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev and Galicia (now of Kiev and All the Ukraine); Metropolitan Leonty of Odessa and Kherson (now of Kherson and Tavrida); Archbishops—Antony of Chernigov and Nezhin, Varlaam of Simferopol and the Crimea († 1990), Iov of Zhitomir and Ovruch; Bishops—Antony of Chernovtsy and Bukovina (now of the Urals and Northern Kazakhstan), Ionafan of Pereyaslav-Khmelnytsky and Varfolomei of Volyn and Rovno.

During the nomination Archimandrite Nifont delivered an address:

"Your Eminence, Vladyka Exarch, Your Eminences and Graces, God-wise archpastors and fathers of Christ's Church.

"By the decision of the Synod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, I, an unworthy sinner, was most unexpectedly elected to be a bishop of the Church of Christ. In fear and trepidation, fully conscious of my infirmity, I stand today before you, my gracious fathers, full of reverence before the loftiness of hierarchal ministry.

"At this sacred moment, as at the Last Judgement, I see my whole life before me and I would like to recall some of it. I was born into a simple Christian family in the land of Volyn. I was not yet two years old when my father and my mother forsake me (Ps. 27.10) They died so early that I never knew their admoni-



tions; I did not know a mother's tenderness and love. In childhood I often went to the grave of my mother and there, nestling up against the cold mound, I learned to be patient and to pray. Life was hard and weeping there comforted me. There certainly must be some secret in an orphan's prayer; a secret I have not guessed to this day. I admit that when at thirteen, reading the Bible, I saw the words that follow those mentioned above—*then the Lord will take me up* (Ps. 27.10), I was very happy, knowing that the Lord would receive me, and since then: *one thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple* (Ps. 27.4) In my orphaned childhood I dedicated myself to the Mother of God, Whom I magnify, and to Her alone on this day too I entrust my future life.

"I see God's mercy in the fact

that my episcopal consecration will take place on the Feast of the Glorification of the Mother of God. During my thirty years' ministry in the parish I revered this feast in particular, thanking the Most Pure Virgin Mary for Her maternal care of me, an unworthy one; for Her mercy towards me. And today, at this responsible moment for me, I am consoled by the fact that my consecration will take place on the Feast of the Glorification of the Mother of God...

"Today, when the powers of evil are encroaching upon the Holy Orthodox Church, I am conscious of the great responsibility which is being placed upon my weak shoulders as a heavy burden of the Cross. I place my trust in the mercy of the Lord and I believe in the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who said: *My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness* (2 Cor. 12.9).

"In filial love I thank His Holiness Patriarch Pimen of Moscow and All Russia by whose side I spent four years of my life. My heartfelt thanks to you, dear Vladyka Exarch, the Holy Synod and the Synod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, for the great trust and honour shown to me by nominating me a bishop of Christ's Church. I humbly ask you, dear Vladyka Exarch, and you God-chosen archpastors, to offer your hierarchal prayers for me to the Chief Shepherd and Saviour, to Our Lord Jesus Christ. May the grace of the All-Holy Spirit, which will descend upon me through your holy hands, strengthen me so that I may with all my heart continue to serve God, the Christian Church and our earthly Motherland..."

On March 31, 1990, the Saturday of the Akathistos to the Mother of God, during Divine Liturgy celebrated in the Cathedral of

St. Vladimir, the venerable archpastors who had conducted the nomination, solemnized the consecration of Archimandrite Nifont as Bishop of Khmel'nitsky and Kamenets-Podolsky.

Presenting the crozier to the new bishop, Metropolitan Filaret delivered an exhortation:

"Your Grace Bishop Nifont, beloved brother in Christ, today, on the Feast of the Glorification of the Mother of God, by the power and action of the Holy Spirit, through the laying-on of our hands, you were elevated to the lofty ministry at God's Church. On behalf of your brother archpastors and all the people of God praying together with us, I congratulate you upon receiving hierarchal grace. You are stepping upon the path of episcopal ministry at a hard time for Orthodoxy in the Ukraine. In the Western regions relations have aggravated between the Orthodox and Catholics of the Eastern Rite. The Orthodox people are being persecuted by the Uniates. A section of the clergy and laity, incited by non-ecclesiastical powers, have formed a schismatic group. Our archpastors and pastors in the region are suffering hardships. One who desires to be a bishop in these conditions, according to the words of Apostle Paul, truly *desireth a good work* (1 Tim. 3.1)..."

"The life of a bishop must be an example for pastors and the flock, and if through his faith and God-pleasing life he sets an example to his flock his word will have power and with his ardent faith he will kindle the hearts of his spiritual children entrusted to him. A bishop is the guardian of the purity of the Church teaching and the canons of the Ecumenical and Local Councils. As you know, today the enemies of the Church are doing their utmost to destroy the unity of our Church. Do not yield to this temptation,



believe firmly that the ship of the Church is being steered by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The history of our Church is full of schisms and ecclesiastical disturbances. They have all passed and the Church ship continues sailing in the Sea of Life. The same fate awaits today those pastors who have fallen into the sin of schism.

"You have seen and you know what love the pious people show to good and assiduous pastors and with what heartfelt pain they look upon negligent pastors leading an unworthy life. Certain 'pious zealots' try to discredit their pastors, censuring them for vices, often imaginary. The duty of a bishop is not to believe blindly such censuring. However, he must be strict and demand that the pastors live and behave in accordance with their calling. They must be reminded of the stern words of the Prophet Malachi: *And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you. If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart* (Mal. 2. 1-2).

"With love we bless you upon your new path of service with

undeviating hope that you will justify our choice. And now take this crozier as a symbol of power and firmness granted to you by the Chief Shepherd. May it always be your support in the difficult episcopal ministry. Now go and bless the faithful Orthodox people longing to receive your first hierarchal blessing."

* * *

Bishop Nifont (secular name Vasily Solodukha) was born on October 5, 1948, in the village of Galyna Volya, Staraya Vyzhevkа District, Volyn Region, into the family of a collective farmer. He became an orphan at two.

In 1963 he finished an eight-year secondary school in the village. Up to 1967 he worked at the collective farm. From 1967 to 1969, he served in the Soviet Army. After demobilization he worked at the railway depot in the city of Brest. In 1970 he entered the Moscow Theological Seminary. From 1971 to 1974, he served as hypodeacon to His Holiness Patriarch Pimen of Moscow and All Russia († 1990). On March 20, 1974, he was professed and given the name Nifont in honour of St. Nifont, Bishop of Novgorod. That same year he was ordained hierodeacon by His Holiness Patriarch Pimen. In 1974 upon finishing the seminary he entered the Moscow Theological Academy.

In 1974, Archbishop Vladimir of Dmitrov (now Metropolitan of Rostov and Novocherkassk) ordained him

hieromonk and he was sent to serve in the Volyn Diocese.

By the ukase of Archbishop Damian Marchuk of Volyn and Rovno († 1987) dated March 18, 1977, he

was appointed Rector of the Holy Trinity Church in the village of Rudka-Kosinskaya, Volyn Region. In 1988, Archbishop Varlaam of Volyn and Rovno (subsequently of Dnepropet-

rovsk and Zaporozhye; † 1990) raised him to the rank of archimandrite. In 1989, he was appointed superintendent dean of Rozhishche Church District of the Volyn Diocese.

Has a Pilgrim Anywhere to Lay His Head?

"...At the council of elders on December 3, 1990, the decision was made that the city authorities be requested to allow the use of the land of former 'Rent House', later a bakery, for the construction of a guest house for pilgrims. In this connection we respectfully ask you to consider the returning to the monastery of the above-mentioned land where we plan to arrange lounges for pilgrims, a library, a conference hall, a reading room for holding lessons of the Sunday school and other events, and a museum. We hope that this guest house will benefit our citizens and our many compatriots who come to the monastery," —this is a letter addressed to the Pechery City Executive Committee by the Father Superior of the Pskov-Pechery Monastery, Archimandrite Pavel.

The Pskov-Pechery Monastery of the Dormition is a unique place as divine services have been conducted there uninterrupted for 500 years. This stronghold of Orthodoxy in the north-west of our country, which withstood the attack of the Barbarian hordes, has also withstood the storm of atheism. Founded in 1473, it won fame by its many great ascetics. St. Kornily the Martyr, Sts. Yefrosin of Pskov, Mark, Iona, Vassa and many others laid the spiritual foundation of this monastery. For nearly 300 years it acted as a frontier fortress and withstood many attacks and sieges. In the last decades the monastery shared, together with the Trinity-St. Sergy Lavra and few other remaining cloisters, the role of a spiritual stronghold of Orthodoxy where all Russia came for spiritual nourishment, healing and instruction. Today too the Pskov-Pechery Monastery extends hospitality to all those who wish to receive spiritual guidance.

The Providence-inspired spiritual revival of Russia has stirred up the hearts of millions of our compatriots. Remembering the paths that lead to holy places, monasteries and churches, many of us have set off for the Pechery Monastery as well.

As in old times so today the holy monasteries of our land open wide their doors and gates for our brothers and sisters in Christ, giving them a beneficial opportunity to be strengthened in faith through work and prayer and to bring back to their cities and villages a piece of heavenly joy.

Where else one can meet a starets, confess one's sins, ask for a counsel and blessing upon a good deed. Pilgrims make a mixed crowd: workers and peasants, artists and authors, engineers and servicemen, the old and the young—all come to pray in the monastery, leaving behind their worldly vanities.

Pilgrimage to holy places is an old Orthodox tradition. It is above all a way for a Christian to strengthen his soul spiritually and to repent. Since the Orthodox Church life has always been based on monastic rule, both the clergy and laity have always felt the need for bringing their life in conformity with monastic life. The whole Russian church culture has grown from monastic culture, thus making pilgrimage an integral part of the life of a Christian who has chosen non-monastic way of life.

People come to monasteries to pray, to confess, to talk with a starets, but in order to give pilgrims the opportunity to receive spiritual nourishment in the fullest possible way, cloisters have to have hotels and guest houses. The cause of the personal salvation of a pilgrim and the improvement of the moral climate in society depends on whether the monastery authorities succeed in hosting worshippers and providing them with everything that is necessary for their stay in the monastery and on whether their pastoral care is truly spirit-bearing, because the worshippers who bring back to the world the spiritual health they have acquired in holy places become themselves little torches of the faith of Christ.

In the corridor of the house where pilgrims to the Pskov-Pechery Monastery are accommodated there hang three instructions "On Obedience", "Work and Prayer" and "On Divine Services". In the rooms there are "Schedules for the Day". Intended to help pilgrims, they express the concern of the Church for newcomers. The schedule provides for private morning prayers, evening prayers in church, common prayers after supper and evening prayers before going to bed. On Sundays and feast days, pilgrims attend divine services and receive Holy Communion. They are engaged in continuous spiritual acts, balanced by obediences, that is work to put the monastery in good order. It is also beneficial that the schedule provide a three-day rest upon arrival so that pilgrims could become accustomed to the life of the cloister and acquainted with its shrines.

Of course, few monasteries have the opportunity to host many pilgrims. Most of them are still being restored. Sometimes visitors have to be accommodated in churches themselves or maintenance buildings. For instance, pilgrims to the Optina Hermitage have to occupy all the three tiers of the Church of St. Leo of Catania. The lack of necessary facilities makes their stay far from comfortable. Fortunately, they come to monasteries for a different purpose. Their innermost

aspirations are based on the conscientious option for spiritual rather than material benefits. Nevertheless, ordering everyday life is not least important. It is to be taken into account indeed that among pilgrims there are people who are not prepared for ascetic life and are accustomed to certain conveniences. Therefore, if the living conditions in a monastery do not differ very much from those to which they are accustomed, then their yet-unfortified spiritual power will be directed to the most important thing which is prayer, fasting and obedience.

The Pskov-Pechery Monastery is well-organized. Yet this monastery cannot offer pilgrims suitable places to stay either. Most of them are accommodated at the lower storey of the Father superior's house, and some of them in the hospital chamber of St. Lazarus's Church. But at one time, before the Great Patriotic War, the Pskov-Pechery Monastery had a hotel for pilgrims, situated at the Holy Gates. Today this building belongs to the Pechery Museum of History and Ethnography. The former "Rent House" down town, which stands half-ruined today, no longer belongs to the monks either. The city authorities are planning to build at this prominent spot a hotel for foreign tourists. Somebody even set a rumour afloat that this plan had been agreed with the Father Superior of the monastery—an apparent attempt to prepare public opinion in favour of the plan. The rumour has caused a serious concern among the community of the monastery and believers in the city. The council of elders addressed the city authorities and the public through the local press. "It is generally accepted", the appeal states in particular, "that the historical and architectural ensemble of the Pskov-Pechery Monastery, which has established itself through centuries, is a pearl of Russia and as such it has a role to play in the aesthetical and ethical education of our people, which cannot be overestimated. Let us recall now how many pearls of this and even bigger size are scattered throughout the vast lands of Russia, and all the roads and paths leading to them have been overgrown with the grass of oblivion. This means that it is not architecture, not even history that attracts pilgrims and visitors to our city. They are attracted rather by the living and life-giving Spirit who dwells invisibly in old churches and in the monastic cells of the monastery...

"Now all this is challenged because the city and the monastery is one living organism. Now our city... is threatened with a serious illness. Indeed, if a hotel for overseas visitors appears in our city, it will be a different city altogether. For together with foreign cosmetics and electronics, the guests will bring over moral pluralism, that is to say, the spirit of profit and every kind of amorality... They will actually come for entertainment. And it is in this strange 'school' of business and lechery that our children will be educated.

"True, a city entering the market economy needs money. But is it everything that can be put on sale?

Do we really want it that way? Do we really choose this way? Do we, who are heirs of St. Aleksandr Nevsky, the Kulikovo Plain, Poltava and Borodino?

"Our heritage says that neither on earth nor in heaven is there such a treasure as the human soul, for even a single human soul steadfast in its truth and righteousness is dearer than the whole Universe!

"What is our proposal then? Most important, we want to be heard and our concern for the future of our children and our city, hence our country and our holy monastery, to be shared. We voiced this concern two years ago, when the conception of the development plan for the city was worked out in connection with our government's decision to include our city in the so-called Silvery Ring. At that time our stand was met with a positive response from both those who developed the conception and the public and was later approved by the RSFSR Ministry of Culture. 'The city for its citizens and pilgrims'—this was the motto of this conception.

"In this context we have a plan to build at the place of ruined 'Rent House', which used to belong to the monastery, a guest house for pilgrims. It will include a hotel with various accommodations. Some of the rooms will be free of charge, others will be charged only symbolically, still others will be intended for well-off people. In addition, there will be a refectory, a library (for the local people, too), and a small hall in which the Pecherites would meet prominent cultural figures who often come to the monastery.

"This guest house could relieve the city authorities from the burden of hosting pilgrims. All these concerns would be taken by the monastery upon itself.

"We believe that the time has come to think about our own compatriots, our own brothers and sisters. Look at our pilgrims' faces, look into their eyes and you will perhaps understand that they are the people the Gospel describe as *the salt of the earth* (Mt. 5.13). So why should they huddle at dark corners or lie on the floor instead of sleeping on fresh linen in clean beds? Let them have a day or two of rest in a decent way, without their dignity trampled, without fear and humiliation. Let them be warmed up by our hospitality, care, and love and be renewed in body and spirit. After all, they will leave us carrying to all corners of our land that love and warmth which they have received here. Perhaps, back at home they will be as generous and open for all as we were generous and open for them here.

"We believe in the generosity and love of the Pecherites. We also believe in the wisdom and responsibility of our city authorities. We believe in the Intercession of the Mother of God who have made our city her abode."

This extract from the appeal made by the Holy Archimandrite of the monastery, Archbishop Vladimir of Pskov and Velikiye Luki, as well as the Father Superior, Archimandrite Pavel, the Father Confessor, Archimandrite Ioann, and other monks does not require comments. There is no need to say that the noble

intention of the brethren will benefit not only pilgrims and monks, but also all the citizens of Pechery. We all should remember that Russian culture and way of life have been cultivated by the Church, not the secular world. Equally typical for Russians is a profound attitude to pilgrimage as a symbol of spiritual journey to the heights of faith and piety. But tourism is a thing relatively new for our country; it personifies a different way of life and a different attitude to the world and travel bent as it is on entertainment. Such attitude is characterized by a search for superficial impressions, for anything peculiar rather than useful for the soul. Unfortunately, our monastery, too, appears to be "something new and peculiar" not only for foreign tourists, but now for our compatriots as well.

Our society, including the local authorities in Pechery, concerned as it is for the spiritual renewal of

society, must necessarily support the monastery and pilgrimage more than tourism. One should think about the profound meaning of the mission of hospitality which is to bring to the world through pilgrims that unquenchable light which shines in the monastery. Old Pechery has lived on the monastery and its needs and prayers from old times. It is to be hoped that this far-sighted approach to the conception of hospitality will prevail in the city as intended not so much to attract tourists as to offer spiritual nourishment to pilgrims.

GENNADY ARKHIPOV

Editors' note. In publishing this article we invite our readers to discuss the problems of the renewal of pilgrimage tradition which was so well developed in Russia in the past.

The Mansion of the Apostle of Love

On a clear evening with daytime mist lifted, the blue star-embedded cupola of the belfry in the Monastery of St. John the Divine can be seen even from Ryazan which is 30 kilometres away. On their way from Ryazan to the village of Poshchupovo where the monastery is located, pilgrims can admire this remarkably tall and graceful belfry reminding them of its bygone magnificence. It was two years ago that the bells in this monastery which seemed to have been abandoned for ever rang anew, announcing the revival of its monastic life. On May 20, 1989, Archbishop Simeon of Ryazan and Kasimov consecrated the sanctuary of the Church of St. John the Divine. Worshippers who came to the monastery for the occasion were disconcerted at the sight of the Ministry of Internal Affairs stores still located on the monastery grounds and its general desolation, but cherished a hope that it would soon flourish again.

Historical records on the Monastery of St. John the Divine are very scanty, but there is a rich tradition according to which the monastery was there even before 1237. A more detailed information is available concerning the

fifteenth century. At that time the monastery was located on the Pronya River in Mikhailovsky Uyezd. After the Tatars destroyed it in 1553, the community moved to the Ryazan region. It was ruined by the Tartars again in 1572 and was restored in the early seventeenth century at its present place. After the monasteries' lands were secularized in 1764, the monastery was abandoned to be revived 98 years after by the Honorary Citizen David Ivanovich Khludov. Once on his way to his estate he saw nearby a devastated monastery and on the following day brought to the community the much needed money. Subsequently he would not only give money to the monastery but often come over to work there. His name is honoured to this day. The right side-altar of the monastery's Church of Dormition has been dedicated to St. David of Thessalonica, the patron saint of David Khludov.

After the 1917 Revolution the monastery's fate was not different from that of most Russian monasteries; it was closed while the monks were either sentenced or dismissed. Everything that the monastery had possessed went to the new authorities. And the



Cathedral of St. John the Divine

property was large: it included a school for 70 pupils built outside the monastery walls in 1867, the Khludov almshouse for 150 people, a hospice, two hotels for pilgrims,

Monastery of St. John the Divine under restoration; Archimandrite Avel; Father Superior of the Monastery of St. John the Divine; at the holy spring

a farm house, a brick works, an apiary, and a mill at the Vysokoe village. It also possessed nearly 1100 acres of land.

After the Revolution the monastery buildings were occupied by a vocation school. For some time the Church of St. John the Divine acted as the community house to where the young people came to dance on the floor lined with icons, as is told by old residents, with the images facing up to which nobody paid not the slightest attention. Later the Churches of St. John the Divine and of the Dormition were turned into warehouses of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and repair-shops, and the sign "Staff only" was put on the holy gates. The monastery's cemetery became the place for more store-houses, while the remains of the monks were buried at an enormous common grave close to the Church of St. John the Divine and no cross was put over it. The policemen who guarded the warehouses told the Father Superior Archimandrite Avel that sometimes at night when the monastery emmersed in darkness, a light would appear above the headless Cathedral of



St. John the Divine. It was hardly visible and almost transparent, as if St. John himself came to visit the place, seeing its desolation.

The Monastery of St. John the Divine was returned to the Russian Orthodox Church in the year of the Millennium of the Baptism of Russ. Much money was and is needed to restore it. Three monks who came to stay there in the beginning were later joined by helpers. Some came to work for some time, but eventually stayed, while others came just out of curiosity, without belief, but left with faith in their hearts. Still others were scared away by the hard manual work and four-hours sleep... At present there are over 20 inhabitants. The cells are being restored and Father Superior Avel and the oikonomos Hegumen Iosif live outside the monastery walls, at a former teachers' house.

The monastery's farm is growing. Everything that is done in the monastery, be it working at the farm or hosting pilgrims, is done with love. Pilgrims who come to the monastery from all over Russia are amazed at its hospitality and the vigour of those who have brought it back to life. Last summer a group of Anglicans from the United States came to offer help, and a group of American Orthodox worked there

during their vocations. Many of them are children of Russian emigres.

The monastery treasures the miracle-working Tikhvin Icon of the Mother of God and the revered copy of the Icon of St. John the Divine. Recently one more shrine has appeared there: the relics of Orthodox Prince St. Oleg of Ryazan, which have been returned to the Church.

For pilgrims the Monastery of St. John the Divine is a special place, for miracle-working springs have been revered in Russia since old times, attracting multitudes of people who come to them for





Consecration of the altar in the name of St. John the Divine, Apostle and Evangelist carried out by Archbishop Simeon of Ryazan and Kasimov, May 20, 1989

spiritual and bodily healing. Old residents in the village of Poshchupovo say that on the Epiphany Day people would come to spring in an endless flow. There used to be a book in the monastery to register cases of miraculous healing at the spring. There were a pool and two bathing places and a five-domed stone chapel was built over it in 1874. No traces of them have been left. In the post-revolutionary years the spring was covered in because, as agitators explained, it

was just regular subsoil water. But passing by the ruined shrines and seeing the headless churches and the graceful belfry, believers would still make the sign of the cross, while the sick would still come to the spring that somehow seeped through the ground.

After the monastery was given back to the Church and the spring was cleared and a small chapel was erected over it, the monks began to leave there mugs for believers, but the local teenagers, brought up,

as they were, in godlessness, would pierce the mugs with nails. For them the spring still remained only "subsoil water," as their fathers were taught, and the monks just strange people who did not want to live "normally". The local school, in pursuit of the vogue, invited a monk to speak at none other but a disco session. The community had to ask for a more decent place for a sermon. They hope that precisely these boys and girls will come to work for the benefit of the Church of Christ and acquire spiritual fruits through their work.

Close to the now acting Cathedral of St. John the Divine stands the half-ruined Church of the Dormition of the Mother of God. When pilgrims ask when it will begin to be restored, the Father Superior Archimandrite Avel answers, "Everything takes its course. It is the Lord who is the master of the monastery, while I am only a temporary steward".

Yu. ZHILTSOVA

The Three Holy Hierarchs Podvorye in Paris Marks Its 60th Anniversary

Last February, with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Aleksy, Metropolitan Vladimir of Rostov and Novocherkassk, Chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate, accompanied by N. Kapchuk, churchwarden of the Patriarchal Cathedral of the Epiphany, visited Paris on the occasion of the patronal feast of the Three Holy Hierarchs Podvorye and in connection with its 60th anniversary.

From the airport Metropolitan Vladimir went right to the church where he was greeted by parishioners who had a long conversation with him. On the eve of the patronal feast, February 11, 1991, Metropolitan Vladimir officiated at All-Night Vigil in the Church of the Three Holy Hierarchs which was attended by numerous parishioners, quests and clergymen from the Korsun Diocese. Metropolitan Pitirim of Volokolamsk

and Yuriev who came to Paris on business attended the All-Night Vigil.

On the day of the patronal feast Divine Liturgy was celebrated by Metropolitan Vladimir of Rostov and Novocherkassk. His concelebrants were Metropolitan Pitirim of Volokolamsk and Yuriev; Archpriest Nikolai Inozemtsev, Dean of the Three Holy Hierarchs Podvorye and Superintendent Dean of the Korsun Diocese; Archimandrite Georgy Vostrel, ecclesiarch of the Three Holy Hierarchs Podvorye; Archimandrite Nikon Yakimov, Rector of the Church of St. Mary Magdalene in The Hague; Archpriest Stephen Hedley, Rector of the Parish Church of the Icon of the Mother of God "Consolation of All the Afflicted" and of St. Genevieve; Hegumen Aleksandr Elisov, Father Superior of the Holy Trinity Church in Vanves; Hieromonk Simeon

Kosse, Father Superior of the St. Silvanus Monastery; Hieromonk Varsonofy Ferier, builder of the Holy Spirit Skete, and other clerics.

When Divine Liturgy was over, Metropolitan Vladimir read out a Message from His Holiness Patriarch Aleksy of Moscow and All Russia to participants in the celebrations marking the 60th anniversary of the Podvorye of the Three Holy Hierarchs and handed over, as the Patriarch's blessing, an icon of Christ the Saviour.

Also read out were messages of greeting from Archbishop (now Metropolitan) Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, Head of the Department for External Church Relations; Archbishop Valentin of Korsun, and others. Metropolitan Vladimir addressed the congregation with a speech of greeting. In his speech of reply Archpriest Nikolai Inozemtsev, Dean of the Podvorye, expressed his filial gratitude to His Holiness Patriarch Aleksy, thanked Metropolitan Vladimir and Metropolitan Pitirim for participation in the solemnities, and congratulated all clerics and laymen on the jubilee.

After the Divine Liturgy the parish council arranged a reception.

In the evening, a festal reception was held, which opened with a moleben. It was attended by Metropolitan Jeremias of France, Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarch; Bishop Gabriel of Palmira, Vicar of the Patriarch of Antioch in France; Archbishop Adrian of Central and Western Europe, Exarch of the Patriarch of Romania; representatives of the Serbian and Bulgarian Patriarchates, distinguished representatives of the Roman Catholic Church of France, representatives of Protestant Churches and UNESCO, deputy mayor of Paris, representatives of the municipal council of the XV district, of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry for Home Affairs of France, as well as representatives of embassies, the public and the press.

During his stay in France Metropolitan Vladimir talked with clergymen and laymen, received visitors, met with newsmen, and visited the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs at the request of M. Bertrand Dufourcq, recently appointed French Ambassador to the USSR.

Annual Convocation at the Odessa Theological Seminary

On December 13, 1990, the Feast of Apostle Andrew the First-Called, the Heavenly Patron of the Odessa Theological Seminary, the traditional annual convocation was held in this seminary.

Among the guests who arrived for the occasion were Archbishop Vladimir of Kishinev and Moldavia, Bishops Petr of Beltsy and Vikenty of Bendery, vicars of the Kishinev Diocese, and representatives of theological schools of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Metropolitan Leonty of Odessa and Kherson and the archpastors, who specially arrived in Odessa, celebrated Divine Liturgy on the Feast of Apostle Andrew the First-Called, and, on the eve, officiated at All-Night Vigil. They were assisted by Archpriest Aleksandr Kravchenko, Rector of the seminary; Archimandrite Tikhon Bondarenko, inspector; guests, members of the faculty and students of the Odessa Theological Seminary in Holy Orders.

The Liturgy was followed by the annual convocation which was inaugurated by the rector, Archpriest Aleksandr Kravchenko. The annual report was delivered by inspector, Archimandrite Tikhon. He pointed out that the past academic year was memorable for the seminary: it had been the 45th anniversary since its revival, and all these years the seminary successfully trained pastors for the Church of God. The scale of its activity is now being expanded. In 1990 three first grades, of 30 students each, were enrolled, and the seminary's student body now amounts to three hundred including the first sixteen girl students of the precentorial department. Over 100 clergymen enrolled in the newly

opened correspondence department. The Sunday school, opened more than a year ago, is functioning successfully. Teachers of the Odessa Theological Seminary are frequent guests at schools, higher educational establishments, various organizations and enterprises of the city.

The main speech on the theme, "St. Tikhon Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia", was delivered by Archimandrite Innokenty Shestopal, assistant to the inspector, who emphasized the enormous role played by the great mourner and solicitor for the Church and our Motherland in the hard years of discord, enmity and violence.

He was followed by Metropolitan Leonty of Odessa and Kherson, who pointed out that "a graduate of the theological school should consider it to be his primary duty to improve in the Lord and to acquire knowledge by persistent labour and diligence."

Archbishop Vladimir of Kishinev and Moldavia addressed the audience with a speech of greeting, "We are happy," he said among other things, "that having acquired education at the Odessa Seminary, many young men who come from our sunny Moldavia, honourably fulfil their obediences at parishes situated not only in Moldavia, but also in the Western regions of the Ukraine, sometimes carrying out their pastoral duties under difficult conditions."

Representatives of theological schools of our Church also delivered speeches of greeting.

On the occasion of the feast, the Odessa Theological School received messages from hierarchs of the

Russian Orthodox Church. The telegram sent by His Holiness Patriarch Aleksy II of Moscow and All Russia reads:

"On the Feast of Apostle Andrew the First-Called, and Heavenly Patron of the church of the Odessa Theological Seminary, and on the day of the annual convocation at the Odessa Theological School I invoke God's blessing upon its teachers and students. I congratulate you upon the Feast of the Heavenly Patron of the school and prayerfully wish you to achieve good results and thereby live up to the responsible task entrusted to the management and teachers, and I wish the pupils, by profound knowledge they are acquiring, to justify the labour put in their upbringing and education."

In his telegram His Beatitude Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev and All the Ukraine prayerfully wished the Odessa Theological Seminary blessed successes in

training worthy pastors of the Church of Christ and exemplary citizens of our Motherland.

Also read out were telegrams of greeting from members of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church, archpastors, clerics and individual persons.

The concluding speech was made by rector of the seminary, Archpriest Aleksandr Kravchenko. "The Feast of Apostle Andrew the First-Called", he said, "has become not only a feast for the Odessa Theological Seminary, but also a feast for the entire Church because Apostle Andrew the First-Called is the patron of the entire Russian Orthodox Church."

The festivities were crowned with a concert of church music given by seminary students; pupils of the precentorial department and of the Sunday school at the Odessa Theological Seminary.

Archpriest VALERY VASILYEV

The Opening of the Correspondence Department and Annual Convocation in the Minsk Theological Seminary

In accordance with the decision of the Synod of the Byelorussian Orthodox Church, a correspondence department was opened at the Minsk Theological Seminary on November 26, 1990. The course of studies is four to five years. Every year extramural students will have to attend four sessions: two preparatory and two examination ones. The preparatory sessions are a new fixture, but one that carries on the Byelorussian Exarchate's tradition of gathering young pastors for an annual short-term course under the direct guidance of Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk and Grodno, Patriarchal Exarch to All Byelorussia. Assembling for these sessions, extramural students will get in touch with the seminary instructors, acquaint themselves with the life of the Zhirovitsy Monastery, visit the seminary library, attend lectures, take part in literary-and-art soirees, concerts of church music and other undertakings organized by the seminary pedagogical council.

The inauguration of the correspondence department at the Minsk Theological Seminary began with a moleben conducted by its rector, Archimandrite Konstantin, in the seminary St. Nicholas Church. He was assisted by Hieromonk Nikon, head of the correspondence department, seminary instructors in Holy Orders and clergymen from among the extramural students.

Altogether 31 students have been enrolled in the correspondence department.

* * *

On February 12, 1991, the Feast of the Synaxis of the Three Holy Hierarchs, Sts. Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus, and John Chrysostom, an annual convocation, the second after the seminary's revival, was

held in the Minsk Theological Seminary. The function was attended by archpastors, pastors, teachers, and students of the seminary as well as guests of honour—representatives of fraternal theological schools of the Russian Orthodox Church, including graduates of the Minsk Theological Seminary of the 1950s—the early 1960s. All-Night Vigil was conducted and Divine Liturgy celebrated by Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk and Grodno, Patriarchal Exarch to All Byelorussia, who was assisted by Bishops Konstantin of Brest and Kobryn, Stefan of Pinsk and Luninets; Archimandrite Konstantin, Rector of the Minsk Theological Seminary; Archpriest Vladimir Sorokin, Rector of the Leningrad Theological Academy; Archimandrite Sergy, inspector to the Moscow Theological Academy; Archimandrite Gury, Father Superior of the Zhirovitsy Monastery of the Holy Dormition; teachers at the Minsk Theological Seminary and guests of honor in Holy Orders, the monastery brethren and clerics of the Byelorussian Exarchate.

The solemn meeting was held in the assembly hall of the former seminary building, now occupied by a state-farm-vocational school and placed at the disposal of the seminary for the occasion. Present were A. Gushcha, Chairman of the local Soviet of People's Deputies, and A. Zhilsky, representative of the Council for Religious Affairs at the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian SSR, who attended as guests.

Archimandrite Konstantin, Rector of the Minsk Theological Seminary, gave the floor to G. Povny, acting inspector, who delivered a report reviewing the past academic year. Enrolled in the seminary, he said, are seven teachers, who are members of the staff, and 75 regular and 31 extramural students. The opening

at the end of last January, of the Sunday school at the Minsk Theological Seminary was a significant event in the life of Zhirovitsy. Altogether more than 160 children and grownups attend the school. The report also told of the work involved in distributing the humanitarian assistance from Germany among the needy of the Slonim District.

Archpriest Sergiy Gordun, secretary of the Pedagogical Council of the Minsk Theological Seminary, delivered a speech on the subject: "Franciscij Scorina—the First Byelorussian Printer and Enlightener."

Speeches of greeting to the assembly were delivered by Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk and Grodno, Patriarchal Exarch to All Byelorussia, representatives of the theological schools of Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev,

Odessa, Volyn. Hieromonk Leonid, Senior Assistant to the Inspector, read out a congratulatory telegram from His Holiness Patriarch Aleksy, which said: "I cordially congratulate You, Your Eminence and dear Vladyka Metropolitan, the Father rector, inspector, secretary of the council, workers, teachers and students of the revived Minsk Theological Seminary on the Feast of the Three Holy Hierarchs—the Heavenly Patrons of the theological school. I wish You God's help and blessing for the effort involved in educating and bringing up future ministers of our Holy Church and Motherland.

"Yours affectionately, Patriarch Aleksy."

Hieromonk NIKON

Some Thoughts on the Parish School

The fundamental difficulty as far as teaching in parish schools is concerned is that teachers have no long-term programmes or study plans at their disposal. This was the state of affairs in September 1990 and remains so to this day. Teaching is essentially a haphazard affair since the tradition of parish education has been lost and the training of those clergy and lay people who have acted as teachers has proved inadequate. In these complicated times a firm grounding in the faith, spiritual wisdom and a knowledge of canon law are essential in all aspects of Church life and can be formed as a result of experience and education. However, over the last seventy years the Church's means of mass education have been reduced to three seminaries and two spiritual academies, and until very recently colleges, parish schools, catechism courses and the like have been completely non-existent. The possibility of opening schools attached to a church appeared two or three years ago (although this has only been sanctioned by law since October 1990). But in that period the Church has trained no staff, nor has it developed study-programmes or literature or set aside premises for the new schools. However, the need to initiate religious education and the thirst for ecclesiastical knowledge does not allow for lengthy periods of preparation and as a result parish priests have hastily started the process themselves. And what education do they have? Seminary education? By no means always. Spiritual academy education? Even rarer. And usually they have absolutely no pedagogical training whatsoever. The best that can be hoped for is good intentions.

And so at the end of the first (and in some cases even the second) school year it is necessary to take account of what we have done thus far, of what we have taught and what we have learnt. How are we to go about teaching next year, in two or three years' time? What subject matter should we be teaching in parish

schools and what place should they occupy in a general system of spiritual education?

As we acquire ever greater experience we will, as the years progress, have to become more forward-looking and better qualified. What, then, are the necessary prerequisites for a parish school teacher's qualification? A sound education? Faith? Spiritual experience? These are without doubt essential factors. But there is another quality, equally important—unconditional churchiness, that is conscious membership of the Russian Orthodox Church. And the teacher must realize this membership in the unity of Liturgy and prayer, in the Sacraments or he will be unable to lead his pupils to conscious and genuine membership of the Church. This concept is of the utmost importance because an inadequate Christian education results in an unclear appreciation of the Orthodox faith which manifests itself in practical life, in language, in national and political ambitions prescribed by Orthodoxy, but most important of all, in catechetical errors and schismatic actions. Schism in the Russian Church has become a tragic reality of our times, but by no means everybody understands that such deviation from the Church is actually self-deification. Many people are simply ignorant of the majority of Church issues and if our students are not inculcated with a sound body of ecclesiastical knowledge the schisms will become ever deeper.

Medical, psychological and pedagogical knowledge are also indispensable. The problems whose solution requires this sort of expertise include: determining the length of lessons in accordance with the pupils' age and the particular features of their personality and age group; the need to check work, set homework and so on. School life, and life it certainly is, immediately generates a wide range of problems.

As soon as the teacher enters the classroom he is faced with a mass of practical problems: how to

construct the lesson; how to conduct himself; how to be convincing; and how to keep the attention of distractable children. If from the very outset the teacher does not know how to conduct himself in the classroom, then his experience will not be a happy one.

Many teachers begin the school year with the attitude "let's get things under way and then see how it goes". And it is a great shame to note that many priests too underestimate the importance of the teacher's tasks.

The organization of parish schools requires a special collective effort. Without doubt both an integral and graded school programme is needed, as are methodological instructions, manuals and so on. The groundwork has to be laid. The teachers have to be taught.

In almost all schools Biblical history is taught chronologically, from the creation of the world and progressing eventually to New Testament times. This traditional approach is encouraged by the wide-spread phenomenon of the historicity of consciousness, the chronological structure of the Bible and by common sense. However, there are other approaches to this question. Our Christian view of history is built on the teachings of the Gospels. We look at history through the prism of the New Testament, we interpret the Old Testament by means of the New. This is a particular feature of Christian consciousness which should be reflected in Christian instruction. First of all, we should become acquainted with the New Testament and then (or in a parallel fashion) set about studying the Old. First of all the light of Christ should illuminate the heart of the pupil and then the Wisdom of the Divine Providence which orders history can be revealed in His rays.

If the study of the Old Testament takes up the whole of the first school year then the pupils will only begin to acquire a specifically Christian knowledge in the second year. If the Gospels are not studied from the outset then the basic events which are to be found at the heart of the Church's feasts will remain a mystery to the students. Furthermore, it can be supposed that there will be some students who will not wish to continue their studies. Indeed, cases have occurred, albeit rarely, when children for various reasons have left school. Hence, it is essential what kind of information children start to glean from the very first lesson. Every lesson, every day spent at school should be planned with especial responsibility, so that the child who leaves school early will have learnt at least part of the Truth.

The teaching of the New Testament in parish schools is by no means straightforward. One common mistake is that the student starts to read and interpret the New Testament in order, beginning with Matthew, then Mark and so on. It is not surprising that the students find this approach boring and react with indifference to the subject matter. The most important consideration in the formulation of a New Testament programme is the age of the pupils. If the school takes infant-school children then they can be initially kept in one group and be taught the basic Gospel stories,

using all four Gospels simultaneously. Moreover, all the events can be conditionally grouped around the Christmas and Easter stories. These basic events in the earthly life of our Saviour are intelligible to infant-school children, but it is sensible to avoid the parables as well as mysterious tests and prophesies of texts relating to theology during the first study phase. In the second phase it is considered appropriate to extend the study programme to include the Acts of the Holy Apostles, though this should not entail a large volume of work. The second phase will be dealing with plenty of other material. In the third phase it is necessary to return to the Gospels, but this study will include the teachings of Christ, His words and parables. And the fourth and final stage should be dedicated to the study of the history of the texts and the biographies of their authors, the historical period in which the Gospel stories took place, archaeological factors and the comparative study of separate books. Of course this classification is conditional. It is impossible completely to separate the earthly life of Jesus Christ from his teachings and from the historical period. But what is important here are the orientational priorities and the corresponding methodology.

It is not to say that there are no other possible ways of formulating a New Testament study programme for parish schools. There may well be other alternatives. But the programme outlined above avoids repetition and takes into account the fact that pupils of different ages will perceive material in different ways. As far as the study of the Old Testament is concerned, this may begin during the second phase and continue in the third and fourth.

Liturgical studies can be limited to a general acquaintance with the content of Church services starting with the Liturgy itself because it is the Liturgy on which the structure of the church building is based and which can be found at the heart of all Church practice. If we can establish the fundamentals of ecclesiastical knowledge, starting with a basic understanding of the Liturgy, then we can hope that the pupils will become active Church members in the future. It is all the more important that parish schools have as their goal not only the imparting of knowledge but the education of Church people. And to this end it is necessary to explain the meaning of confession and repentance, the receiving of the Holy Communion and participation in the other sacraments of the Church.

It might well be asked how it is possible to teach such complicated concepts to infant-school children. It is possible but it is necessary to pay particular attention to the use of illustrated material. This is the only way to achieve success. Explanatory texts should be divided into separate paragraphs with sub-headings. But it is not enough graphically to explain to the children the meaning of services. They must get into the habit of participating actively in the services themselves.

Not one day at school should be spent in vain and with every day that passes the children should

acquire more and more practical experience of religious behaviour.

Special importance should be attached to the congregational singing of basic prayers: the *Our Father*, Hail Mary, *Meet it is*, the Creed, etc. Those few songs that are sung in church by all the people (although with ever decreasing frequency) should constantly feature in the school's programme.

Experience has shown that lessons explaining the structural layout of the church building, vestments, the sacred vessels, the theological meaning of icons, the purpose of the books, the festivals of the Church's year, etc. prove especially interesting. This is understandable, it is easy to remember this sort of material, it is more graphic. It is convenient to conduct these lessons in church rather than in the classroom. Similarly, they can be conducted in museums where icons and sacred vessels are displayed and the architecture of churches can be explained. Such lessons take on the character of pilgrimages which in turn facilitates the transformation of the parish school into a Christian community. A cause for joy indeed!

How can we prevent spiritual edification becoming nothing more than the recitation of lectures? How can we foster in children a love for the Church, for the Holy Scripture and Church tradition? These questions lead us to a consideration of the personality of the teacher.

Teachers in parish schools must not only teach but educate the children and introduce them to the Church. It is thus essential that he be a church person himself, that he sets an example. It is no secret that as far as the children are concerned what the teacher says is not nearly as important as what the teacher is.

It is important that the teacher does not lose that creative spark, both in teaching and in communication with the pupils. But how can this be achieved? After all, he often has to talk about subjects which from an Orthodox point of view are difficult to take in. This is the point when the child's mind often starts to wander, which results in a lack of receptivity to the moral content of the revealed truth. There is a real danger that the lesson will turn into moral hero-worship, whereas the primary task of a parish school education must always be Christian spiritual edification. There is an opinion which says that it is not so important to teach as to create a church atmosphere, in which the child (or adolescent) can immerse himself and thus acquire the necessary moral qualities. But this entails another danger, conditioned by the state of contemporary society. So many anti-Church and schismatic phenomena are engendered by a lack of discrimination or by elementary ignorance of matters of dogma and ecclesiology. If we do not teach these

disciplines we can expect more and more dissention and instability in the future.

To strike a compromise between matters academic and spiritual is no easy task. But the solution to this problem must be carefully and seriously sought. Unfortunately, many teachers and administrators in parish schools, be they laymen or priests, have no appreciation of the serious nature of the problem and propose the establishment of gymnasiums or lycees though they have very little school experience themselves. The following conditions represent the minimum requirements for the establishment of a parish school: firstly, a programme based on theological knowledge and academic theory; secondly, teachers who possess the necessary academic and spiritual qualities. If a person does not have real pedagogical skills he should not be recommended for teaching, despite any other worthy qualities he may possess. It is to be hoped that all who work in parish schools will take note!

What precautionary measures can be suggested to the future teacher? Based on our 18 months teaching experience, the following points have proved to be important:

- 1) Teachers should only read from books in exceptional circumstances, for example when a quotation is required.
- 2) Do not disregard jokes or interesting stories—they can break the monotony of the lesson. Limit your lectures to a quarter or half of the lesson.
- 3) Combine several themes in one lesson.
- 4) It is essential to write notes on the blackboard and in exercise books.
- 5) Ask dynamic on the spot questions and call out pupils as appropriate.
- 6) Only award marks in examinations.
- 7) Use the pupils' names.
- 8) Keep a close eye on pupils' behaviour and in extreme cases punish or send pupils out of the room.

These and other pieces of advice are based on teaching experience and psychological theories. It should be remembered that the younger the pupil, the more difficult it will be for him to adapt.

In general, becoming a teacher in a parish school requires genuine creativity. It is necessary to repeat it over and over again to call those who feel they wish to and are able to work in the educational field. Teaching children means bringing the flock into the Church. The spiritual life of future generations depends on the fruits borne by parish education.

Deacon ANDREI LORGUS

First Steps

In many towns and villages around the country Sunday schools are being opened, where the younger generation can receive elementary Biblical instruction, are taught about the Liturgy and learn Church Slavonic and Church music. Our correspondent, B. Kofymagin, met the head of one such school, the parish priest of St. Elias' Church in the village of Selikhovo of the Tver Diocese, Archpriest Boris Nichiporov. This is what Fr. Boris had to say:

"Our school was founded in February 1989 and initially twenty children took part in classes twice a month. One class would take place in church, the other in house of culture *Sovremennik* in Konakovo, the regional centre where most of the pupils live. Nowadays, there are two classes a week. Last year we had a second intake of about 100 pupils. This is obviously much too many people for one group, but at the moment we do not have any more teachers. However, young psalm readers and altar servers will soon be able to give lessons and the members of the choir have been a great help.

"The study programme is mostly comprised of Bible stories and singing. I also talk about dedication feasts and about the saints. The parochial church council decided to introduce the study of Church Slavonic into the programme.

"The school takes in children from believing and non-believing families alike. Our main task is to introduce them to the Church, though we never rush people into being baptized. To be honest, I'd rather not refer to institution as a school: it would be better to call it a club, because clubs are formed on the basis of informal interests. We want both children and parents to come to us as if to a family home. To make things more interesting for them we arrange coffee-mornings and go on outings together to churches, museums and to the theatre. Last year we visited the Trinity-St. Sergy Lavra, Tver, Moscow and Leningrad. The trips were financed partly by the parish and partly by parents. One of the factories in our area has given us a house and we hope to turn it into a summer camp. The director of our local state-farm has given us ten hectares of land. Of course, there are difficulties too. One of them is that there are very few boys at the school and there are hardly any men on the parents' committee and hardly any men pedagogues. Without them it is difficult to make serious decisions. Sadly, many parents who send their children to us show no interest in the classes themselves.

"In my view one of the most important principles of working with children has to be gentleness. If you frown and tell your pupils, 'You must say your prayers, fast and stand through the whole of the service', you won't get very far. It is not every contemporary person that can take in the whole depth and fullness of the teachings of the Gospel and therefore our classes are partly of a cultural orientation. It is true to say that many of our contemporaries are unable to understand the meaning of certain

paintings because they are unfamiliar with biblical subjects. School children *do* Dostoevsky and Tolstoy but are unable to understand the depth of thought of these writers.

"Gradually, of course, we must bring not only the children but also the parents into the Church, but this is a long and complicated process. I am profoundly convinced that, to this end, the priest should mix not only with the children but with parents too. We are trying our best to get these links off the ground.

"As I was saying earlier, we hold several classes each month in church. Those who are baptized make their confession and receive Holy Communion. Let me say a few words about children's confession. It seems to me that the accent should be placed on repentance and on self-knowledge so that the child is aware of what within him is lofty and pure, as well as what is wrong. It is necessary to form the inner world of a child so that it possesses true spiritual orientations.

"Unfortunately, the tradition of the religious instruction and education of children has largely been lost in the Soviet period. We live in a secular world and it is pointless to try to revive the type of church school that existed earlier in Russia. Similarly, it is futile to try to imitate the religious education techniques of Russians abroad: specific elements perhaps, but certainly not in their entirety. They were formed in different conditions, in a different historical context. We must work creatively and not copy models already in existence.

"Another thing I wanted to mention was that if the child doesn't like the priest then he won't go to him. By no means every priest is a born teacher and we ought to recognize this. Therefore I do not think it is entirely correct to strive to establish a Sunday school in every parish. Or at any rate, if we indeed plan to do this we should advertise for believing pedagogues.

"However, the situation in the villages is very different to that in the towns. Everything here takes a little longer. It was only relatively recently that people came to realize that if they sent their children to Sunday school, they would not face any threats. People are coming to us and bringing their children. That itself is a considerable achievement".

From the editor: We have received several phone calls and letters with requests for information about the experience of organizing religious education in the parish. Having established schools in their towns and villages, clergy and laity are interested to know if any teaching programmes and methodological recommendations have been developed. The editorial board of our journal would like to ask readers to send details of their experiences in the field of religious education. The material received will be used in our publications and, we hope, be useful to those seeking consultative help.

Krasnoyarsk Diocese

In December 1990 Bishop Antony of Krasnoyarsk and Eniseisk visited parishes in the towns of Anzhero-Sudzhensk, Belovo, Chebula, Kemerovo, Krasnoselka, Mariinsk, Propkopyevsk, Taiga, Topki, where he conducted divine services and met with representatives of the local government bodies to discuss a number of ecclesiastical problems.

On December 8 Vladyka Antony consecrated, in honour of St. Serafim of Sarov, the ground-floor part of the Church of the Protection of the Mother of God in the town of Kolchugino, Kemerovo Region, and celebrated Divine Liturgy. Acting on behalf of all parishioners, Archpriest Sergiy Plaksin, Rector of the church, presented an icon of the Mother of God to Bishop Antony.

His Grace Antony ordained Vitaly Kutuzov and Andrei Chalkin deacons; deacons Vasily Tikhomirov and Aleksandr Sofroshkin were ordained by him priests, and hierodeacon Iov Korzhikov was ordained hieromonk.

Odessa Diocese

On December 22, 1990, the town of Izmail on the Danube marked the 200th anniversary of the seizure of this fortress by Suvorov's forces during the war against Ottoman Turkey.

Russians first settled in the Danube area in time immemorial. In the 15th-17th centuries these lands repeatedly became the arena of hostilities. Not only did the Turkish invaders take Christians, Zaporozhye Cossacks, Bulgarians, Moldavian and Wallachians prisoners, but also subjected the conquered residents of this region to forcible Islamization. The lands around the estuaries of the Dnieper and the Danube were the coveted dream of Porta of the sultans. In the late 18th century Turkey's dominion in the Danube was nearing its end. Early in 1787 the Turkish forces concentrated around Izmail. But the battle of Izmail turned the course of events in the direction least desired by the aggressor.

On December 22, 1790, the famous Phanagorian Regiment, which inclu-



St. Catherine's Cathedral Church in Krasnodar

Krasnodar Diocese

Starting from Christmas of 1990/1991 the Krasnodar Diocese issues the monthly diocesan newspaper called *Pravoslavny Golos Kubani* (The Orthodox Voice of the Kuban). Priest Sergiy Ovchinnikov, editor of the newspaper, who came to the Publishing Department of the Moscow Patriarchate in Moscow to share experience, told us that the eight-pages newspaper has an edition of 15,000 copies. It publishes topical and specific articles devoted to various questions of ecclesiastical life and material salvific for man's soul.

The diocesan clerics, who assembled in the St. Catherine Cathedral of Krasnodar to celebrate the name-day of Archbishop Isidor of Krasnodar and the Kuban on January 21, 1991, spoke of the newspaper as of a thing of particular concern for the diocesan hierarch. On the day of the feast Archbishop Isidor celebrated Divine Liturgy and, on the eve, officiated at All-Night Vigil, assisted by many diocesan clerics. These divine services were attended by numerous parishioners. After the Liturgy the archpastor was congratulated on his name-day by Archpriest Valentin Mertsev, dean of the cathedral church; Archpri-

est Ioann Martynyuk, diocesan secretary; superintendent deans archpriests Konstantin Korobov and Petr Dashevsky, representatives of the cathedral's parishioners and of the hierarchal choir.

Archbishop Isidor of Krasnodar and the Kuban receiving congratulations on his name-day





Protection Church in the town of Kolchugino, Kemerovo Region



Bishop Antony of Krasnoyarsk and Yeniseisk consecrating the altar in the name of St. Serafim of Sarov at the ground-floor Church of the Protection in the town of Kolchugino, Kemerovo Region

ded Greandier companies of the Novgorod, Ingermanland, Smolensk, Vitebsk, Apsheron, Rostov, Uglich, Dnieper, Arkhangelsk, Tula, Chernigov and Vologda infantry regiments, launched the storm of the fortress.

Fighting was particularly fierce at the Bendery Gates. The Polotsk musketeer regiment came under furious enemy fire. This is what Colonel N. Orlov of Suvorov's Gene-

ral Headquarters wrote on this score: "Led by its glorious colonel Yatsunsky, the Polotsk regiment makes a bayonet thrust against the enemy, but at the very outset of the attack Yatsunsky is mortally wounded, the soldiers hesitate; seeing this, the regimental priest raises high cross with the image of the Redeemer, inspires soldiers and rushes together with them against the Turks" (N. Orlov. *The Storm of*

Izmail by Suvorov in 1790. St. Petersburg, 1890.

In his letter to G. Potemkin of December 13, 1790, General-in-Chief Count Aleksandr Suvorov-Rimniksky wrote: "Your Highness, today we shall have a thanksgiving moleben at our new Spiridony's. It will be sung by the Polotsk priest who raised the cross in front of this brave regiment" (A. Suvorov. *Letters*. Moscow, 1987).

The author of the letter had in mind Father Trofim Kutsinsky, priest of the Polotsk infantry regiment, who for his heroic act was decorated by Empress Catherine the Great with a diamond-studded cross on St. George's ribbon, raised to the dignity of archpriest and granted 500 rubles in a lump and 300 rubles life pension. *Istorichesky Vestnik* (Historical Bulletin), 1891.

The fall of the Izmail fortress led to the liberation of the subjugated people in the area of the Danube estuary and for ever established Russian statehood and Orthodoxy there.

On December 21, 1990, His Eminence Metropolitan Leonty of Odessa and Kherson (now of Kherson and Taurida), accompanied by the Odessa clergy, arrived in Izmail. In the evening he was received at the Executive Committee of the Izmail City Soviet.

The festivities began on December 22. In Izmail's Cathedral Church of the Protecting Veil of the Mother of God Vladyka Leonty celebrated Divine Liturgy during which he offered up a prayer "for the leaders and fighting men who gave up their lives for the faith and the Motherland." After a thanksgiving moleben the clergy and laymen, to the pealing of bells, left the cathedral and headed for the monument to Aleksandr Suvorov, where army men and Suvorov school cadets, dressed in the uniform of Russian soldiers of that time, lined up, keeping guard of honour. Vladyka Leonty laid a wreath of fresh flowers at the foot of the monument and congratulated the townsfolk on the glorious jubilee.

After the departure of His Eminence and guests from Odessa the solemnities went on. Military brass bands could be heard everywhere, military units marched in a solemn procession, and songs resounded in the city.

For the first time in the city's post-war history, a church procession, with the singing of "Holy God!" went from the cathedral church down Suvorov Prospekt, Kutuzov, Phanagoriiskaya and Krepostnaya streets, to the former Turkish mosque which now



Metropolitan Leonty of Odessa and Kherson (now of Kherson and Tavrida) at the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the liberation of Ismail from the Turkish yoke



Archbishop Lazar of Odessa and Ismail reading the Gospel during the All-Night Vigil in the Archangel Michael's Church of the Convent of the Nativity of the Mother of God in the village of Aleksandrovka, Odessa Region

houses a diorama of the fortress's storm. Numerous people joined this stream, taking up the words of the church canticle.

On the square in front of the diorama, where the above-mentioned fierce fighting took place in the past, Archpriest Valery Alekseev, Dean of

the Cathedral Church of the Protecting Veil and Superintendent Dean of the Ismail Church District, assisted by clergymen, conducted a panikhida. The singing of "Memory Eternal" crowned the jubilee festivities in Ismail.

Archpriest VALERY ALEKSEEV

By decision of His Beatitude Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev and All the Ukraine and the Holy Synod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Archbishop Lazar, who formerly occupied the Ternopol See, has been appointed the ruling hierarch of the Odessa-Izmail Diocese.

Early in March 1991 Vladyka Lazar visited the Convent of the Nativity of the Mother of God near the village of Aleksandrovka, the Cathedral of the Transfiguration of the Lord, the Church of St. Mitrofan of Voronezh in the town of Bolgrad, which has not yet been returned the Church, the Dormition Church in the town of Tatarbunary, the Church of St. Parasceve the Martyr in the village of Borisovka, and the Ascension Church in the town of Belgorod-Dnestrovsky.

During Divine Liturgy celebrated in the Church of the Archangel Michael in the Aleksandrovka Convent of the Nativity of the Mother of God, Vladyka Lazar ordained Stepan Marku, student of the Odessa Theological Seminary, deacon, and I. Sas—priest.

Addressing the new flock in the days of the Holy Quadragesima the archpastor called them to spiritual fight against sin, to repentance and prayer.

Penza Diocese

Archbishop Serafim of Penza and Saransk (now of Penza and Kuznetsk) has been serving in Holy Orders for 25 years already. His Grace Serafim's fruitful ecclesiastical activity has brought him several awards of the Russian Orthodox Church: the orders of Prince St. Vladimir, 2nd Class, of St. Sergy of Radonezh, 2nd Class, and of Orthodox Prince St. Daniil of Moscow, 2nd Class. The celebration of this significant date was timed to the day of Vladyka Serafim's hierarchal consecration.

On October 18, the day of the commemoration of Moscow saints and miracle workers: Petr, Aleksey, Iona, Filipp and Ermogen, Metropolitan Ioann of Leningrad and Ladoga, who came to Penza to attend the festivities, celebrated Divine Liturgy and, on the eve, officiated at All-Night Vigil in the Penza Cathedral Church of the Dormition. Vladyka Ioann was assisted by the jubilarian—Archbishop Serafim, and Bishop Prokl of Ulyanovsk and Melekesy. Taking part in the



Metropolitan Ioann of Leningrad and Ladoga and Bishop Prokl of Ulyanovsk and Melekes taking part in the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the ministry of Archbishop Serafim of Penza and Saransk (extreme right)

divine service were also clerics of the Penza and the neighbouring dioceses.

After a thanksgiving moleben and the singing of "Many Years", Metropolitan Ioann addressed Archbishop Serafim with a brief speech of greeting. Vladyka Ioann recalled Archbishop Feodosy Pogorsky of Ivanovo and Kineshma († 1975), under whose influence the then young student of the Leningrad Theological Academy, future Archbishop, Serafim, took monastic vows and chose the road of service to the Holy Church. His Grace Serafim was congratulated by Bishop Prokl and Archimandrite Varsonofy, dean of the cathedral church (now bishop of Saransk and Mordovia). On behalf of members of the faculty of the Leningrad Theological Academy the jubilarian was greeted by V. Bronsky.

Speaking in reply, Vladyka Serafim thanked the archpastors, who came to attend the celebration, for the joint service and warm congratulations, and all those present, for the common prayers.

V. BRONSKY

Rostov Diocese

In 1990 Metropolitan Vladimir of Rostov and Novocherkassk and Bishop Sergy of Azov conducted divine services in the Rostov Cathedral

Church of the Nativity of the Mother of God and in other churches of the diocese, visited parishes, met with communities and individual believers, preached the word of God, ordained clerics for 45 newly-opened parishes, received groups of pilgrims from foreign Churches.

On April 21, catechetical classes for adults were started at the cathedral church, and on April 22 a parish school for children was opened. The lessons were preceded by a moleben. The first lesson was conducted by Metropolitan Vladimir.

On April 16, 1990, Bishop Sergy consecrated the Resurrection Cathedral in the town of Starocherkassk, the former capital of the Don Cossacks.

September 21, the Feast of the Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God, was the patronal feast of the Rostov cathedral church. For this day the iconostasis had been completely restored and gilded; the former cathedral yard had been returned to the cathedral church, and a baptistry, service buildings for the clergy, a parish school and a diocesan library are now under construction there. Work has been started on the restoration of the cathedral's belfry. On the day of the patronal feast Divine Liturgy was celebrated by Metropolitan Vladimir, Archbishop Isidor of Krasnodar and the Kuban, and Bishop Sergy of Azov.

On November 26, 1990, Divine

Liturgy in the Rostov cathedral church was celebrated by Metropolitan Vladimir, Archbishop Valentin of Korsun, Bishop Niphon of Filippopolis (representative of the Patriarch of Antioch to the Patriarch of Moscow) and Bishop Sergy of Azov. The same hierarchs officiated at All-Night Vigil conducted on the eve. After Divine Liturgy Bishop Niphon presented to Metropolitan Vladimir, Chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate, the Order of Sts. Peter and Paul, the Chief Apostles, 1st Class—the award of His Beatitude Patriarch Ignatios IV of Antioch and All the East.

Last year the Rostov Diocesan Administration held three diocesan meetings devoted to the issues discussed at the latest Bishops' and Local Councils, and also to current issues in the life of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Rostov Diocese.

* * *

Late, in 1988, the half-destroyed Church of St. Mary Magdalene, Equal to the Apostles, was returned to the worshippers in the village of Krasny Desant, on the shore of the Sea of Azov. With the blessing of Metropolitan Vladimir of Rostov and Novocherkassk, church utensils, vestments and liturgical books from the Rostov cathedral church were turned over to the reopened church. The first divine service there was a moleben conducted before the church icon of St. Mary Magdalene. The cupolas, the three-tier five-metre-high iconostasis were restored within a brief span of time, and bells installed in the belfry. Plans provide for the restoration of the church exterior, construction of a church house and renovation of the fence. The revival of the church is promoted by the local authorities, neighbouring collective farms and enterprises.

Ryazan Diocese

On July 13, 1990, in the Cathedral Church of the Archangel Michael in the Ryazan Kremlin, which is now a museum, Archimandrite Avel, Father Superior of the Monastery of St. John the Divine, and T. Proskova, the chief curator of the museum, signed an act on the transfer of the relics of Orthodox Prince St. Oleg of Ryazan to the Russian Orthodox Church. The ceremony of the transfer of the relics was attended by Archbishop Simeon of Ryazan and Kasimov,

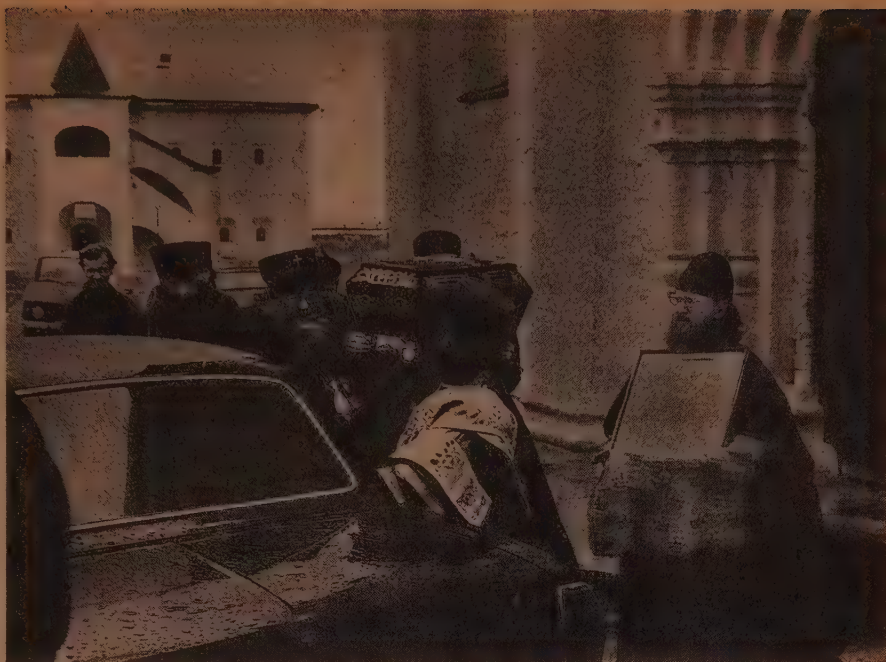
G. Firsova, Deputy Chief, the Department of Culture of the Regional Executive Committee, and L. Maksimova, Director of the museum.

The troparion and kontakion to Orthodox Prince St. Oleg of Ryazan resounded under the vaults of the Cathedral of the Archangel Michael. After "Memory Eternal", sung in keeping with the Rules for the locally-revered saints, the relics were transferred to the Cathedral Church of Sts. Boris and Gleb, and after Divine Liturgy—to their permanent place—the Monastery of St. John the Divine.

Vologda Diocese

In 1990 Archbishop Mikhail of Vologda and Veliki Ustyug conducted divine services in the Cathedral of the Nativity of the Mother of God in Vologda and in parish churches. During this period he ordained reader Valery Zakharov deacon, and deacons Andrei Drambyan and Grigory Tsebruk—priests.

In the same Cathedral Church Archbishop Mikhail bestowed hierarchal awards upon a number of diocesan clerics. Many of the beginners, for the most part young priests, were honoured with the first hierarchal award—the right to wear the epigonation. Vladyka Mikhail also bestowed patriarchal awards upon some clerics: Archpriest of the Cathedral Church Vasily Chugunov and Archpriest Serafim Sotsky were granted with the right to wear a mitre; Archpriest Aleksandr Kulikov, Rector of the Church of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God in the town of Ustyuzhny was decorated with the Order of St. Sergy, 2nd Class, priest Georgy Titov Rector of the recently opened Church of the



Holy Trinity in the town of Totma;— with the Orden of St. Sergy, 3rd Class, priest Retr Borodulin, Rector of the St. Nicholas Church in the village of Lamanikha, Vologda District, with the Medal of St. Sergy, 1st Class; pectoral crosses were awarded to priest Aleksandr Kulchinsky, Rector of the Church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross in the town of Gryazovets, and to Father Valery Burkov, secretary of the diocesan administration. Father Vasily Pavlov of the Cathedral Church, precentor of the hierarchal choir, was made archpriest.

New Orthodox communities continue to be registered in the diocese; moreover, at the end of last August the Vologda Regional Executive Committee adopted a decision on a partial transfer of the Prilutsky Monastery of the Saviour, situated in the

vicinity of Vologda, to the Russian Orthodox Church.

Also worthy of note is the expansion of the church educational work in the diocese. A series of lectures were given in the cathedral church for the catechization of persons preparing for the Holy Sacrament of Baptism, and also for the benefit of the already baptized worshippers who want to improve their knowledge of the Orthodox doctrine.

The opening, with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Aleksy II of Moscow and All Russia, of the Vologda theological school was a great event in the life of the diocese. A thanksgiving moleben was conducted in the Vologda cathedral church by Vladyka Mikhail, who was assisted by clerics. Teachers of the new educational establishment also took part in the moleben.

Father VALERY BURKOV

His Holiness Patriarch ALEKSY

On the Sunday of Orthodoxy

My beloved, the first Sunday of Lent is celebrated by the Church as the Feast of the Triumph of Orthodoxy. Historically speaking, this feast is connected with the final victory over the heresy of iconoclasm, which for several centuries had plagued the Orthodox world.

For the man of today it sometimes seems that the veneration of icons is just a detail in the realm of Orthodox theology. He is perplexed and wants to know why the Triumph of Orthodoxy is called the victory over iconoclastic heresy, and not over something else.

The iconoclasts maintain that God cannot be depicted. The Orthodox fathers in defence of Church Tradition connected closely the veneration of icons with the fundamentals of Christianity. Indeed, God is uncognizable, ineffable and unportrayable. But He Who is above any human world, condescended to be born a man; He Who was invisible became visible through taking human nature. And so: *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life (for the life was manifested...) declare we unto you (1 Jn. 1.1-3). And the Word was made flesh (Jn. 1.14) and the Incarnation made the icon possible.* That is why it is possible to be an Orthodox without possessing an icon: in recent years we again, lived through the time of the triumph of the iconoclasts, and many were forced to pray without icons. But one cannot be an Orthodox and reject icons. One who rejects the possibility of icons denies the very foundation of Christian witness of God made man.

Thus we see that in the living organism of our Orthodox Church everything is wonderfully united and commensurate. Everything is interconnected in the living growth of the Church as the Body of Christ. And one cannot arbitrarily cut off any branch from Orthodox Tradition without running the risk of hurting the very foundation of our spiritual life.

Therefore it is not by chance that the day of the triumph of iconoduly is a feast day for all Orthodoxy.

It is not by chance that the feast of Orthodoxy is marked on the first Sunday of Lent. This day crowns the week of special prayerful effort. The word *orthodoxy* in Greek means "right opinion", "correct glorification" and so it can be translated into the Russian not only as *pravoslavie* (correct glorification) but as *pravoverie* (correct belief). It is wonderful that in the Slavonic languages the latter meaning of the word was adopted—correct glorification.

Doxology, according to the Holy Fathers, is the highest step in prayer since it expresses the purest and selfless joy of the soul towards the Lord. The entire purpose of spiritual life consists of teaching man not only to theologize correctly but to pray correctly. Let us recall how in the Great Canon, which we heard this week, we sang that the Mother of God be magnified "*pravoslavno*".

Given this liturgical understanding of Orthodoxy as the ability to praise the Lord correctly, to build one's spiritual life correctly, it became understandable why the Feast of the Triumph of Orthodoxy is held on this Sunday. For when is a person more ready to glorify than on this Sunday when we had spent all week in repentance, in confessing to God our weaknesses, and, having wept over our sins, we approach the Chalice, for the Lord came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance (Mt. 9.13). And how can we help but thank the Lord for His mercy to us or sing praise to the Lord.

Pravoslavie, however, is impossible without pravoverie. The history of the Church shows that where correct belief was violated spiritual life began to decay too. Because, depending on how people conceive God they form their notion of salvation, the relationship between God and man. And if the teaching on salvation, on the final destiny of man, is erroneous or not complete, then the spiritual life of the man is curtailed and incomplete.

Therefore, the point of dogmatic arguments is not formulations of theoretical rightness, but the understanding of the very essence of the relationship of God and man, and, in the final analysis, the understanding of man himself; that is why we must not forget the words of the Apostle: *I know whom I have believed* (2 Tim. 1.12).

Today it is very important for us to know our Faith, for the time has come again to struggle for Orthodoxy. Numerous "teachers" and publications are proposing the Church to re-interpret her Faith in a way that the living spirit of Orthodoxy would disappear.

Some are assuring themselves and us that Orthodoxy is a national ideology. We, however, must know that Orthodoxy is the seeking of life in God and that any state or national order of life is only secondary for us.

Others say that Orthodoxy is a culture, a kind of "cultural heritage". We, however, must know that Orthodoxy is not a creation of cultural forms, but the inner winning of the Holy Spirit.

Still others assert that Orthodoxy is only one of the historically developed forms of Christianity and that it must excel in the merging of all Christian confessions. We, however, want the union of Christians not on a minimum basis of our common Faith (which in fact may be the maximum unbelief of the Protestant world), but on the utmost Plenitude of God-Given Revelation, which was granted to the Holy Fathers. In spiritual life one cannot equate with the weakest but, on the contrary, one must search always for more experienced and spiritually endowed mentors.

There are some who say that Christ is one of the teachers of humanity, such as the Buddha, Confucius or Krishna. But we know that Christ is not simply a teacher or prophet. He is the Lord Himself who became man in order to save men. He saves us not only by His words and sermons, but above all by His Crucifixion and Resurrection and the sending down to us of the Holy Spirit. And that is why we are convinced that any who teaches salvation apart from the Cross and the Resurrection is not sent by God.

There are also those who try to convince people that Christ was someone with extra-sensory perception or a being from another planet. We must oppose this foolish preaching with firm witness of the fact that Christ is God, the Creator of the universe, Who appeared in the flesh "for us men and for our salvation".

My dear ones, do not think that the time of struggle with false teachings is past, left behind in the far off epoch of the Ecumenical Councils. The Lord is calling upon us today too to defend the truth of Orthodoxy from the increasing number of preachers of darkness. He is calling upon all of us, not only hierarchs and priests, but laymen as well, all believers, as it lies in us, to the best of our abilities to defend Orthodoxy at home, among friends, or at work. If some of us do not have enough strength or knowledge to conclusively ground the impossibility of combining Orthodoxy with reviving pagan and other pseudo-religious teachings, then each of us can at least warn our neighbour by saying: "People, such a teacher is far from Orthodoxy and is bearing false witness when he asserts that he is one with the Church and is acting with her consent."

Of course our principal spiritual weapon in defence of the Truth is our prayer. If we are true Orthodox in spirit and not only by name, the Lord will help us Himself by His Grace.

Let us pray for our Church which is being threatened today by false teachings and schisms. Let us pray for our country so that it may again return to Christ, and so that the misfortunes besetting us today may help to illumine the conscience of men and not dull the mind. Let us pray for ourselves too so that in the remaining days of Lent we may succeed in spiritual healing. Let us pray that the Lord may grant us the spirit of truth and prayer of praise and lead us into the joy of His Resurrection. Amen.

St. Ioann the Righteous of Kronshtadt

On Prayer

Prayer is the proof of my intelligent personality, of my being in the image of God, it is the token of my future deification and felicity. I was created out of nothing; I am nothing in the sight of God and I possess nothing of my own. But, thanks to His mercy, I am a person, I have a mind, a heart, a free will and with my mind and my freedom I can, by sincerely turning to Him, gradually increase within myself His eternal kingdom, and slowly but surely multiply the gifts He has given me, draw from Him, as if from an eternally flowing and inexhaustible spring, all kinds of spiritual and corporeal blessings, especially spiritual blessings. Prayer inspires me, reminds me that I am made in the image of God, that with the humble and grateful disposition of my soul towards God and with my free will, I can, by continually multiplying God's spiritual gifts, be made perfect and infinitely increase my divine likeness and my heavenly joy, for which I am predestined. Oh! Prayer is the sign of the great worth with which the Creator has invested me. But at the very same time it reminds me of my worthlessness (I was created out of nothing and possess nothing of my own, therefore I ask God for everything) as well as my great virtue (I am made in the image of God, I am deified, I can call myself God's friend, just like Abraham, the father of the faithful, if only I would believe without doubt in the existence, love and omnipotence of God, and become ever more like Him in this life through acts of love and mercy).

God is truth: and my prayers must be true as must be my life; God is light: and my prayers must be expressed in the light of my heart and my mind; God is fire: and both my prayers and my life must be aflame; God is completely free: and my prayers must be the free outpouring of my heart. Such is the wealth of the human spirit: it has only to think of God, only sincerely to wish to be united with Him, and He is there. Neither the walls of a house, nor the bars of a prison, nor mountains, nor abysses can prevent this unification. God is with you; the angels and saints are with you; they are there with God before your very eyes, in your heart, like the closest of friends, your companions. Oh! How rich is the human spirit!

When we pray we must surely make our hearts turn to the Lord. It is vital that it should not be cold, cunning, unbelieving or ambivalent. What use would our prayers or our fasting be then? It is good to hear the angry voice of the Lord: *This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me* (Mat. 15. 8). So let

us not stand in church with weak spirit, but rather let each one of us be alight, searching the Lord with his spirit. People will not think highly of those services which we conduct coldly, by force of habit. What God wants is our hearts. *My son, give me thine heart* (Prov. 23. 26), because the heart is the most important part of a person, it is his life; more than that, the heart is the very person. Therefore, whoever does not pray or serve God with his heart does not pray at all, because in that case it is his body that is praying, which being on its own, deprived of the soul, is like dust. Remember that when kneeling in praying you are standing before God, who knows the mind of all. Therefore, your prayers should include all your spirit and all your mind.

As long as we are diligent in prayer, our souls will be peaceful, warm, bright and at ease; moreover, we will be both with God and in God. When we neglect our prayers temptation and all kinds of confusion occur. Oh, most blessed time of prayer!

The heart's insensitivity to the truth of words of prayer is a result of the heart's lack of faith and unawareness of one's sins, and this in turn stems from secret feelings of pride. A person can tell whether he is proud or humble by his feelings when he prays; the more sensitive and ardent the prayer, the more humble the person; the colder, the prouder. Remember that when saying your prayers to the Lord God, the Three in One, you are calling on the Father from all eternity, the Father of all creation, of angels and of men; remember that all the heavenly powers astonish you, the caller, and gaze upon you with love because you are calling with faith, and love, and seemly reverence of our common Creator, the Lord Almighty, whom they love without ceasing and before whom they bow in profound adoration. Oh, what happiness, what a blessing, what greatness, what virtue to call upon the eternal Father! You must constantly and devotedly cherish this great joy, this blessing that your God in His grace has given you, and remember it when you are saying your prayers. God hearkens to your prayers, the angels and saints of God hear your prayers.

When you pray to Our Lady or to one of the saints realize that you are a member of the Church of which she is the foundation, "The beginning of spiritual enlightenment" (Akathistos to the Most Holy Mother of God, ikos 10), and know that you are closely related to all who now live in heaven, like a brick in a building, albeit a soft weak one. In this way you will understand how prayers come so easily to the saints: for

we are all subject to one head that is Christ (cf. Eph. 1.22) and we are all animated by the same Holy Spirit.

At the end of your own private morning and evening prayers, call upon the holy patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles, bishops, confessors and venerable monks, ascetics and other holy people so that, seeing in them the presence of great virtue, you can yourself become the imitator of such virtue. Learn from the patriarchs the faith of children and obedience to the Lord; from the prophets and apostles—zeal for the glory of God and for the salvation of men's souls; from the bishops—zeal to teach the Word of God and through their writings to further the possible glorification of His name, to strengthen the faith, hope and love of Christians; from martyrs and confessors learn firmness of faith and piety in the face of unbelieving and impious people; from ascetics—the mortification of passions and lust, prayer and devout thought; from unmercenaries—generosity and help for those in need.

The Word of God is God. Therefore, faithfully believe every word of the Lord; the Word of God is deed, and your words must match your deeds; so having given your word, fulfil it. When we pray our words must be deed and truth, not lies, not pretence, not flattery. Our whole life must be built on this model.

When praying always believe firmly and remember that your every thought and word can without a shadow of a doubt become deed. *For with God nothing shall be impossible*, (Lk. 1. 37). *He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit*, (1 Cor. 6. 17). So neither is your prayer impossible. *All things are possible to him that believeth* (Mk. 9. 23). Keep your word: a precious

word. *Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.* (Mt. 12. 36).

Never tire of praying for others, either at their request or on your own or with them: you will receive God's mercy, the grace of God in your heart delighting and strengthening you in faith and love for God and your neighbour. These words are true, they are taken from experience. Usually we pray rather unwillingly for others, out of necessity or habit and without the full participation of the heart. We must force ourselves to pray with our whole heart, with great faith and great audacity and thus achieve the great riches of the mercy of our lavish and generous God. *But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering, for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.* (Jas 1. 6). It is pleasing to God, the Father of us all, when we willingly, with faith and love pray for each other, for He is Love, ready to show mercy to everybody for mutual love. The Holy Spirit says: *Pray one for another, that ye may be healed* (Jas. 5. 16). See how pleasing it is to God when we effectively pray one for another!

The Church, when praying together, is the great strength of God, conquering the legions of the devil and able to ask of God every perfect gift and help, protections, deliverance and salvation.

O Lord, give me a simple heart, that is forgiving and open, faithful, loving and generous and a worthy dwelling place for Your great Love!

O Lord, grant that Your spiritual and material gifts may not be idle in and around us: give them saving and profitable motion. Give these gifts to us all. May the actions of each one of us multiply Your gifts, O Lord!

On Self-Love

My beloved brethren, we have heard the prophetic promise made by Christ who said: *Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man* (Jn. 1.51). And we, brethren, can see the open heaven. In our Orthodox churches Christ descends not only into our bodies, but also installs himself in our souls. In the sacrament of the Eucharist he gives us great grace, and we shall hope that living our life in repentance, prayer and good works will bring us to the Heavenly Kingdom. Surely, our good and bad deeds will be judged at the Last Judgement.

Look, self-love is generated in us already in childhood. Naughty and careless, we are often fretful and rude to grown-ups. We would not tolerate reproaches, and this vice takes root in our hearts. When young, we reject admonition and advice, are proud and intolerant of objecti-

ons, while ourselves ready to object to anyone. When we come of age, the vice of self-love takes firm root in our hearts. We begin with arrogant thoughts, continue with arrogant feelings and end with arrogant actions.

To eradicate self-love one should first of all become aware of sin. Now let those parents who have unbelieving children recall how and why their children arrived at such an ungodly state. Was it not the result of their parents' sins?

Thus, in every trouble and trial we should always be aware of our own sinfulness. In order to eradicate self-love from one's heart, one should pray. In praying so, we seek to exorcize from ourselves that monstrous passion which is called self-love. And may the Lord help us, for to Him is all glory unto ages of ages: Amen.

Bishop VENIAMIN MILOV of Saratov
(† 1955)

The Feat of Imitating Saints

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Every day the Church commemorates saints, but today is a special occasion for it is the Sunday dedicated to all saints. Orthodox Christendom commemorates all the righteous men of the Old and the New Testament who have pleased God. This host of saints is so great and immense that the church calendars and anthologies of the lives of saints cannot contain the names of all those who by their lives had glorified God on earth and whom God glorifies now in Heaven, in His Kingdom. The Church established the Feast of All Saints in order that the saints whose names are known only to God might be glorified on earth too. Apart from these saints of God we are glorifying today those whose lives and acts are known throughout the world, and whose names we bear. Therefore this day may be called the name-day of every Christian.

However, it is not only for the sake of the glorification of saints that the Church established this feast. She is offering us today examples to follow, and how many examples there are! The holy men and women, both young and old, monks, nuns and laymen, warriors and physicians, those who had witnessed the earthly life of the Saviour and those who have lived in an epoch nearer to us, such as St. Serafim of Sarov and St. Nikolai of Japan teach us today how to please God. And if we have gathered together today to honour their memory, then we must remember the admonition of St. John Chrysostom who says: "The veneration of a saint consists of following his example."

So we must follow the example set by the saint. But a question may immediately arise: in what must we imitate them? If we look into the lives of the saints of God we shall find that the life of one is not like that of another. One sought salvation in a desert and another in a noisy city; one spent his days and nights in prayer, another devoted most of his time to social work; one observed strict fast, another always ate moderately. What must we do to inherit Eternal Life? We shall find the answer to this in the Gospel: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart... and thy neighbour as thyself* (Lk. 10. 27). These words of the Saviour point to the essence of a Christian feat, of Christian life. The point is not what kind of an act it is, or in what form good works are performed. The importance lies in the motivating power of the good works. If they are performed for the sake of God, then they are sacrifices pleasing to God; but if they are done for the sake of self-indulgence or mundane

interests, then they do not bring us any spiritual benefit. Good works are estimated by our intentions. "Works without good intention are the same as a body without a soul and God rejects them," teaches St. Augustine. Thus, whatever a Christian does or whatever work he is occupied in, he must do everything to the glory of God and the benefit of his neighbour. In this way the saints lived and found their salvation despite the outward difference of their feats.

And all of us occupying different posts, fulfilling diverse public duties, must remember the saying of St. Paphnutius "What pleases God is not one or another occupation of a man, not what seems perfect in the way of his life, but sincerity and spiritual disposition. God judges us not by our merits for then none of us would get into the Paradise, but by our love for Him, by our desire to do His wise will".

There is another question connected with the imitation of saints. When it comes to the point of asceticism, Christian piety, some sigh and say: "Now the times are different, so are the people." Hieroschemamonk Sergy of the Holy Mountain, a pious ascetic, expressed himself well on this point: "Suppose that the times are different and so are the people... but is God not the same from Whom the salvation of people comes, upon Whom depends the flow of life, the times and circumstances?... It is not time that affects people or promotes their spiritual strength, but their will and their own hearts; because the one who sincerely desires salvation nothing, neither time, place, nor circumstances, will lead astray from the path of the Gospel. Only those lazy and mindless of their salvation can say that the times and people are not the same... and thereby justify their passions, sins and perdition.... No, my friends, God was, is and will be the God of salvation."*

The revered saints of God who lived in different historical epochs, in diverse conditions, teach us by their lives that it is not time or place that save man, but his will and purpose. St. Paul tells us all in his epistle: *Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation* (2 Cor. 6.2). That is why no one, under any pretext, in any rank or state, should evade his personal feat of salvation: the almighty grace of God, which was effective in the saints, has not decreased today. And the grace is granted to those who are diligent and work-loving and desire to inherit Eternal Life.

How must we begin our imitation of saints?

* *Letters from the Holy Man to His Friends About Holy Mount Athos*, Moscow, 1895, p. 148.

The answer to this question we shall find in St. Macarios of Egypt, who teaches: "One who wants to approach the Lord must first of all, even against his inclination, compel himself to do good." We must, according to the Saint, compel ourselves to pray and to be humble, meek, patient, loving, kind; not to feel superior and not to speak ill of anyone. Seeing our zeal and good will, the Lord Himself will help us to fulfil His commandments and abound in goodness.

The following example will show you the benefit of such self-compulsion. Once a nobleman, proud, malevolent and arrogant, entered a monastery. The hegumen of the monastery, seeing the spiritual blindness of the new-comer, placed him on duty at the entrance of the monastery and told him to bow to all comers and ask their forgiveness. It was a difficult obedience for such a man. However, by suppressing the inclination of his heart by his will, he fulfilled the obedience placed upon him by the hegumen. After a while, the Lord seeing the goodwill and zeal of the postulant, softened his heart and opened his spiritual eyes; seeing the sinfulness of his soul he began to ask everyone forgiveness with deep sincerity. In a short time this monk attained the measure of spiritual statute and became one of the best monks in the monastery.

Seeking to imitate the saints we must also remember that the beginning of every virtue and God-pleasing work may be small. The feat of prayer begins from short prayers and several bows in the morning and evening; meekness,

from conceding to a neighbour of ours; charity and love, from aiding the sick or a grieving man. The least kindness done for God's sake may be infinitely great and valuable at the Judgement of Eternity.

Having taken the path of virtue, we must not be content with what has been achieved. The one who is content with his spiritual state and does not desire improvement errs dangerously. In spiritual life, in the imitation of saints, one cannot attain a certain state and remain always in it. "If you do not advance," teaches St. Augustine, "you recede without fail."

Celebrating today the Feast of All Saints let us remember that tomorrow is the first day of the Sts. Peter and Paul Fast. Every church fast is the best period for testing our good will, the best time for entering upon the path of imitating saints. First of all let us try to get rid of the wrong notion that this fast is of small importance and need not be observed. Everything fulfilled by us, according to the Church Rule, promotes our salvation and, on the contrary, anything of the Rules unfulfilled is a sin drawing us away from God. Therefore, let us try to abstain and pass in piety the period of the fast blessed by the Church, cleanse our conscience in the Sacrament of Penance, and make an effort to receive Holy Communion uncondemned and thus spiritually strengthened and take the path of following the examples set by the saints. Amen.

HEGUMEN FEODOSY,
lecturer at the MTA

On the Feast Day of St. Varlaam of Khutyn*

We have assembled in our church today to commemorate one of the events in the life of the patron saint of our church, St. Varlaam, the Hegumen of the Khutyn Hermitage. His *Life* tells us that one winter he came to visit Metropolitan Ioann of Novgorod, who like every person in the city held the pious old man in deep respect. When the visit was over, the Metropolitan asked him to come again from his Khutyn Hermitage. The holy man replied: "I shall come over in a sledge on the first Friday of St. Peter's Fast." The Metropolitan marvelled at this answer because snow melts and leaves come out on St. Peter's

Fast even in the north. But he asked no further questions of the holy man.

Some time passed and the Metropolitan forgot those words. But suddenly, when the appointed day came, clouds covered the sky and it snowed, and fields and meadows became covered with snow. People in Novgorod were frightened, for it meant the destruction of the corn and ultimately famine. The authorities were also horrified. Together with their Metropolitan they were appalled, knowing not what misfortune would follow the event which seemed to them a manifestation of God's wrath.

Meanwhile St. Varlaam came to the city in a sledge as he promised. He looked joyful, cheerful and gratified. People in Novgorod were amazed at his joy, saying: "We face a trouble". But the saint said: "No trouble. Bring me some off-springs." When they were brought, everyone saw something like locusts covering them. The snow destroyed the pest. At this time the sun rose, the snow melted, and the fields were covered

* The sermon was delivered at the Church of the "Consolation of All the Afflicted" Icon of the Mother of God at Bolshaya Ordynka Street in Moscow on June 13, 1963 (the church has a side chapel in Honour of St. Varlaam). The movable feast celebrated on the First Friday of St. Peter's Feast is dedicated to a miraculous deliverance of Novgorod from a locusts' invasion in the end of the 12th century.

with moist. The great harvest that followed was remembered by people in Novgorod for many years.

Recalling this event, we see in it an instruction: do not philosophize, trying to judge what is the wrath of God and what is His mercy. We often take as wrath what is actually a manifestation of boundless love. If we understand it, then no murmur of discontent will escape our lips. Even if we do not learn about the beneficial outcome of an apparent misfortune as early as people in Novgorod did, we shall come to realize it in a while.

The Lord does not know hatred. His wrath is a manifestation of the love of the Father who wishes to put right the wrongs made by his children. Let nobody ever think that the Lord wants to do us harm. He loves us with boundless love, and if we respond to the Creator with the same love and faith, we shall be happy and joyful notwithstanding the apparent misfortune. And those who are far from the church will be astonished at our joy, as were people in Novgorod who saw the saint joyful when it seemed that God's wrath struck the Novgorod land.

If we live with such love and faith in the Lord, then our faith will be as strong and steadfast as that of the saint. We shall see how strong his faith was in another event. Once, entering the gates of Novgorod St. Varlaam saw that a man who had committed a wicked act was about to be executed. He stopped the execution and brought the man to his place. Eventually the man spent his life doing good. At another occasion the saint

again happened to pass by the place where an unjust execution was in preparation. Recalling that the saint had stopped the previous execution, the relatives of the accused besought him to protect the innocent man, but the saint passed by in silence. His disciples asked him why he did so, as indeed the first man was guilty while the second one was not. And the saint replied: "If the guilty one had died he would have also died in Life Eternal. For he would have come to it with his heart soiled and his hands stained with blood. I stopped the execution so that he might be reformed in this life, and you can see now that he is doing the deeds of repentance. But if I had intervened in behalf of this other man, to whom the unjust execution will open the doors of the Heavenly Kingdom, whatever sins he has committed, then, left on the earth, he would probably not follow in the steps of Christ. Moreover, he might have taken offense at the unjust accusation. In this way I would only prepare for him a torture in hell." These words speak of boundless love, for according to faith, St. Varlaam sought to make a person happy in eternity.

Let us pray that we may have at least a little part of the boundless faith that St. Varlaam had and that he may teach us to read in the events of life the good will of the Lord for us not to defile our lips with murmur of discontent and our hearts with impurity and that we may be as bright and cheerful as he was. Amen.

Archbishop KIPRIAN ZERNOV
(† 1987)

On the Perniciousness of Sin and the Struggle With It

There occurred at the dawn of human history the greatest ever tragedy—the Fall. It was a conscious and free will of man to assert its autonomy, that is independence from God. Man sinned in that he transferred the centre of his life and work from God to himself. Thus what belongs to soul and body prevailed in him and confused his reason, sensations and will. Sin, like corruption, came to penetrate the whole human being. It was sin, my brothers and sisters, that disrupted the communion of man with God and became the source of human suffering and dissatisfaction.

A few years ago a famous preacher came to visit our Church and our country. Speaking in Moscow, he said that he had been to many countries of the world, and wherever he had been, he saw people suffering. They often happened to be people prominent in society, nevertheless they were suffering in their hearts. Some were suffering from loneliness, while others from inadequate

communication with those around them, and all were aware that neither fame nor money could meet the deep-felt needs of their souls. He told about a city in his country where the richest and the most famous artists lived. Yet the same city had the greatest number of psychiatrists in the country. Why is it so? What is the reason of these people's sufferings? We, believers, know that God created man in such a way that he may be fully satisfied only in Him. St. Augustine writes in his *Confession*: "Thou created us, O Lord, with pursuit of Thee, and our heart will not rest till it finds rest in Thee".

There is a fascinating plant growing in the Middle East*. Its fruits seem beautiful, but once touched they go to ashes. Similarly, sin tempts with sweet promises, but once committed it brings confusion, and scruples, and ultimately sobering.

* Ferocious Cucumber, a perennial plant of the gourd family.

It is difficult of course to struggle with sin because of our limitations and profound weakness. According to Father Pavel Florensky, sins stand around our heart in tight formation barring the way for the freshening breath of grace. As our great writer Fedor Dostoyevsky said, "God struggles with Devil, and the human heart is their battlefield". Those who search for God with zeal can feel all the hardness of this inner struggle. St. John Chrysostom said: "If we could see that hard and invisible struggle for pure souls going on in the spiritual world, then the most grandiose war battle would appear to us a child's play."

How can we overcome this greatest plight which is sin? Experience shows that if a sinful passion is not rebuffed from the very beginning, it will gradually take root in one's thoughts, wishes, sentiments and will, thus making one a slave to the enemy of the human race. All holy fathers unanimously witness to the necessity to cut off sin at its very inception. A Christian is called to struggle against sin. This is the struggle for life, but life in sin, according to St. John of Kronshtadt, is continuous dying. To overcome sin one has to repent.

The first words to be pronounced by Christ the Saviour when He went out for public preaching were: *Repent: for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand* (Mt. 4.17).

The prodigal son who came to realize that he himself was to blame sets us an example of repentance. The Lord expects us to repent too, that is, to put the blame for our transgressions not upon others but upon ourselves. In his diary *My Life in Christ*, St. John of Kronshtadt wrote that repentance "is the rejection and condemnation of sin, denial of all the temptations and attractions of sin, profound hatred of sin as outrage, obscenity, madness and stupid enmity with God, with one's own self and one's own good".

For the success of struggle with sin, one has

to hold one's action and thoughts in permanent control and try to be always in repentive mood and make confession as often as possible. The sacrament of confession helps a person to relieve himself from the burden of his sins and provides support to him at times of spiritual crisis. Confession should be made as though it were the last occasion for us before entering eternity where we will have to face God and His judgement. If we realized clearly that we could die any moment, then our confession would be truthful and sincere. Sin in our soul is like a snake under a stone: just as the snake creeps away as soon as you lift the stone, so your soul is delivered from sin as soon as you make it open.

What also helps to overcome sin is patience in enduring personal predicaments. Our great writer, Nikolai Gogol, for instance, liked to be reproached for his failures because he knew that it would contribute to his spiritual growth. This is what he wrote in one of his personal letters: "O how much we need these endless insults and this offensive tone, these soul-penetrating sneers at our failures. There is at the bottom of our souls so much hollow and worthless pride that to be purged of it we ought to endure various unpleasant circumstances every minute".

Brothers and sisters, the time of harvest is at hand, for the deadly hour often comes all of a sudden. The second fearful coming of the Lord will be sudden, when the weeds of sin will still grow in the field of our souls, when some of us will not have yet ploughed the field of our souls to be sown with good seed. Let us embark therefore on the road of permanent struggle with sin and, armed with patience, let us go in the spirit of repentance to our goal which is eternal and blissful life. Amen.

Hieromónk KIRILL
St. Daniel's Monastery

On the Love of God

St. John says: One who asserts that he loves God and despises his neighbour lies; for how can you say that you love God Whom you cannot see when you show no love for man whom you can see? (Cf. 1 Jn. 4.20).

These words of St. John are based on today's lesson; To the lawyer's question which is the greatest commandment, Christ points out that the first commandment is the commandment to love God, and that the second is similar to this, and that the two commandments contain in themselves all the law and teaching of the prophets.

Without love of God love for one's neighbour cannot be full and perfect, because only by knowing God and His love for us we can learn what is true love; and only by learning this love from God can we come to love our neighbour as God commands us with our whole heart, mind and being.

These words of the Saviour apply to our love of God; but our love of man must be like it. What is the meaning of: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind* (Mt. 22.37)? And in another

Gospel it adds: and *with all thy strength* (Mk. 12.30). To love God with one's heart does not mean to love Him sentimentally, passing from emotion to emotion; it means to give Him one's whole heart, that is, to recognize in Him the One Who represents in one's own personal life the highest and holiest value, to accept it with one's innermost and profoundest self, with the core of one's being, and make the service of Him and fulfilment of His will the aim of one's life.

Christ says: *If a man love me, he will keep my words* (Jn. 14.23)... He does not say that one who loves Him will pass from emotion to emotion, from tenderness to tenderness; He speaks of something more stern, of greater sobriety: "If I am for you the most precious, if I mean so much to you, then My will, that by which I live, for the sake of which I became man, that for the sake of which I died, must be the most important to you, and not only superficially, but to your innermost self"... We are told to love God with all our souls, with the word "soul" here and in other places signifying "life": with all the strength of one's life, and with the works of our life must we love God, just as Christ says: *If a man love me, he will keep my words*... And not only one's feelings are to be involved in the love of God, but one's whole mind, thought, and creative deeds.

How can we love God? Most often in our neighbour; love God by being on earth, amidst men, His sight, His kindness, His charity, His compassion, the joy, radiance and inspiration which He can bring men. Therefore the two commandments are inseparably bound to each other: *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself* (Mt. 22. 39).

Here rises the question: What does it mean as thyself? In each of us there are different layers of being; there is the superficial, the self-loving, the egoistical; the layer which is capable

of selfishness, hatred, cowardice, all that is ugly in us; just as, of course, of superficial love, the love that can be expressed in words: "I love"... in which the word "I" is in the centre of all; it is that love which seeks in its object happiness and pleasure, but which is incapable of sacrifice, even of simple concession.

There is also another deeper layer, which rises in us when we are faced by something great or tragic: be it joy too great for the heart to contain or sorrow too deep to be expressed in words or tears. In these depths lives my true self about which a writer says: "We must remember that our real nature is not in us, but above us and we are bigger than we are; if we ask 'Who am I?' we must reply: 'The image of God, an icon'..."

Thus we must constantly choose whom we must love in ourselves. The meagre, pitiful, cowardly and insignificant "I" or, on the contrary, that "I" which lives in our depths and is capable of the greatest feat, of the most dazzling beauty? And, of course, the choice must be in favour of our majesty and not of our unworthiness...

Thus to love one's neighbour as oneself is the call to learn to see in each neighbour not his nonentity, but his possible greatness and to serve the greatness, so that man may grow to his full stature of grandeur and beauty. Then the commandment will be fulfilled and both commandments will merge, because by serving this inner man whom St. Peter calls, *the hidden man of the heart* (1 Pet. 3.4) that is, of the depths, we are serving God at the same time, we are worshipping Him in His image and helping this living image to turn into the one planned by the Lord so that the Divine Dream may become a complete, triumphant and wonderful reality.

Metropolitan ANTONY of Surozh

ORTHODOX SISTER CHURCHES

Episcopal Consecration of Archimandrite Theodoros, Exarch of the Patriarch of Alexandria

By decree of the Synod of the Alexandrian Church of June 14, 1990, Archimandrite Theodoros Horeftakis, Exarch of the Patriarch of Alexandria to the Patriarch of Moscow, was designated Bishop of Cyrene.

On the following day the nomination of Archimandrite Theodoros as Bishop of Cyrene took place in the synodal chapel of the Alexandrian Church dedicated to the Great Martyr St. Theodore of Tyre.

On June 17, 1990, during Divine Liturgy celebrated in the Patriarchal Church of St. Sabas in Alexandria, Egypt, His Beatitude Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, Parphenios. III, Metropolitans—Barnabas of Pelusium, Paulos of Johannesburg, Irinaios of Karthage, Petros of Aksum, Nectarios of Kalymnos, Chrysostomos of Zimbabwe, and Solomon of Thebaide solemnized the consecration of Archimandrite Theodoros as Bishop of Cyrene.

Presenting the crozier to Bishop Theodoros, Pope and Patriarch Parphenios III delivered an address in which he evaluated highly the good relations between the Alexandrian and Russian Orthodox Churches.

With the blessing of His Beatitude Parphenios III, Bishop Theodoros was charged to carry on his former obedience till the appointment of a new exarch to the Patriarch of Moscow to replace him. Furthermore, the duties of the exarch of the Patriarch of Alexandria to Athens (Orthodox Church of Hellas) were placed upon him.

On October 3, 1990, Bishop



Theodoros of Cyrene arrived in Odessa. At the airport the hierarch of the Alexandrian Church was met by the assistant dean of the Holy Trinity Cathedral of the Alexandrian Metochion, Archpriest Viktor Petlyuchenko, and by the chairman of the church council, A. Sokal.

On October 7, 1990, the first hierarchal service was held by Bishop Theodoros in the cathedral of the Alexandrian Metochion in Odessa. On October 14, the Feast of the Protecting Veil of the Mother of God, after Divine Liturgy Bishop Theodoros said a moleben and blessed the pupils and teachers of the Sunday School attached to the Alexandrian Metochion.

On October 20, Metropolitan Leonty of Odessa and Kherson gave a reception in honour of Bishop Theodoros. Present at the reception were the Rector of the Odessa Theological Seminary,

Archpriest Aleksandr Kravchenko; the secretary of the Odessa Diocesan Administration, Archpriest Sergy Bozhok, and Archpriest Viktor Petlyuchenko. After the exchange of greetings and friendly conversation, Bishop Theodoros wished Metropolitan Leonty God's help in administering the Odessa Diocese.

Archpriest
VIKTOR PETLYUCHENKO

* * *

Bishop Theodoros of Cyrene (secular name Nicholas Horeftakis) was born on November 25, 1954, on Crete, Greece. He finished primary school and the gymnasium in the city of Iraklion.

In 1972-1974 he was a student at the Rizarios Theological School in Athens. In his second year, he took monastic vows with the name of Theodoros at the Agaratu Monastery dedicated to the Dormition of the Mother of God on Crete. In 1975, he was ordained hierodeacon, and that same year, hieromonk.

Then he enrolled in the theological faculty at the University of Athens; after graduating in 1977 he was enrolled in the department of pedagogics and psychology at the university in Salonica.

In 1978, he was raised to the rank of archimandrite, and in 1979, appointed protosynkellos to Metropolitan Theodoros of Lampis and Sphakia (Crete Archbishopric of the Constantinople Patriarchate). From 1981 he was the Hegumen of the Monastery of the Bodiless Powers on Crete.

On September 2, 1985, Archimandrite Theodoros arrived in Odessa where he took the post of Exarch of the Patriarch of Alexandria to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia.

VII Assembly of the World Council of Churches

The VII Assembly of the World Council of Churches was held in Canberra, Australia, between February 7 and 20, 1991, attended by delegates representing some 440 million Christians from more than 310 Churches—members of the WCC. The Assembly's theme, "Come, the Holy Ghost, renew all things created", reflected the aspirations which in conditions of rapid changes in political and social life prompt man to turn to the sphere of spiritual values and immutable truths.

The delegation from the Russian Orthodox Church, consisting of archpastors, clerics and laymen, was headed by Archbishop (now Metropolitan) Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, Head of the Department for External Church Relations, member of the Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches.

His Holiness Patriarch Aleksy II of Moscow and All Russia sent an Address to the participants in the Assembly.

ADDRESS

By His Holiness Patriarch ALEKSY II to Participants in the Assembly

Dear brothers and sisters, delegates and envoys of the world ecumenical community, who have gathered for the VII Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Canberra, *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all* (2 Cor. 13.14).

I greet you on behalf of the Russian Orthodox Church that is now reviving for a new life, having entered the second millennium of her service.

The life of our Church and our society is being revived in complex and difficult conditions.

A painful but absolutely necessary transformation is now taking place in the historically formed present-day context of our ecclesiastical and social life, and encouraging prospects are opening for the creation of a new historical context of the life of our Church and our country, and the life of Europe as well.

This process of the dying off of the old and the birth of the new opens for the Church great opportunities of Christian witness, but it is also God's challenge and call for our repentance and radical renewal of life. *Put off concerning the former conversation* (Eph. 4.22), so that we *should walk in newness of life* (Rom. 6.4).

We ask for your holy prayers, love and Christian solidarity with us in the extremely difficult task of our renewal and rebirth.

On our part, we—our entire Church—will incessantly pray for you who have assembled in Canberra, for we know that after Canberra the World Council of Churches and the ecumenical movement as a whole enter a new stage in their development which may prove to be decisive for the World Council and its future.

We acclaim the concentration of the Assembly's attention and programme around the main topic: "Come, the Holy Ghost, renew all things created", but, we are convinced, this renewal in Spirit demands of us—the entire humanity and, particularly, of us, Christians, to come to ourselves, to come to Our Father and repent of our grave historical sins of departing from Him *into a far country* (Lk. 15. 13, 17-20), repent of the criminal attitude to the wealth of His creation entrusted to us.

Renewal in Spirit demands of us not only and not so much ecology in nature, in our environment and outer space, as, in the first place, ecology of spirit, ecology in the social milieu, in human relationships.

Beseeching the Holy Ghost to renew all His creation, we ourselves, who *have the firstfruits of the Spirit* (Rom. 8.23), should feel our responsibility and duty, *for we are labourers together with God* (1 Cor. 3.9).

In this labouring together with God *the Spirit helpeth our infirmities... and the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered* (Rom. 8.26).

And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit (Rom. 8.27), what the Spirit says unto the Church: *Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent* (Rev. 2.5).

Dear brothers and sisters, reviewing in Canberra the past of the ecumenical movement and reflecting on the new period in the life and activity of the World Council of Churches, we should always remember *what the Spirit saith unto the churches* (Rev. 3.13) and constantly ask our conscience: is not the Holy Spirit saying to the Churches now as well what in the Revelation of St. John the Divine the Holy Spirit said to the Church of Laodicea?

Canberra's message will become a new word in the ecumenical movement and a new Christian witness in the divided world only if we all—Christians and our Churches—hear the call of the Holy Spirit addressed to us.

And let us make this call to renewal in the Holy Spirit the foundation of a new trend and structure of the World Council of Churches, remaining always true to the apostolic behests that *other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ* (1 Cor. 3.11).

We pray for the World Council of Churches to remain loyal to its basic and original calling to be a Council of Churches that are striving for a joint realization of their common calling to achieve unity in faith and in the eucharistic communion and in the spirit of loyalty to the Toronto declaration, to remain that Council of Churches whose member the Russian Orthodox Church became 30 years ago at its 3rd Assembly in New Delhi.

With love in the Lord and with a prayer beseeching the Comforter—the Spirit of Righteousness—to set us on the right path, in the unity of Spirit and in the bond of peace and love.

ALEKSY, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia

February 1, 1991

Reflections of Orthodox Participants

I. Introduction

The Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox delegates of and participants in the Seventh Assembly of the World Council of Churches, meeting in Canberra, Australia, want to communicate with all in attendance through this statement in order to express to them some concerns. We preface our comments with an expression of appreciation to the World Council of Churches for its many contributions to the development of dialogue among Churches, and to assisting all members in making efforts to overcome disunity. As the Orthodox, we appreciate the assistance given over decades in the process of dialogue leading toward the full communion of Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches.

We also recognize the contributions of the WCC in the work it has done in its Commissions on Faith and Order and on Mission and Evangelism (CWME), its contribution to the Renewal of Congregational Life (RCL), its relief work through the Inter-Church Aid, Refugees and World Service (CICARWS), and in the Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation Programme (JPIC).

Yet, our experience at this Assembly has heightened a number of concerns that have been developing among the Orthodox since the last Assembly. We want to share these with the Canberra Assembly and to tell you where these are now leading us.

The Orthodox concern about these issues should be understood as implying a reluctance to continue dialogue. The present statement is motivated not by disinterest or indifference toward our sisters and brothers in other churches and Christian communities, but by our sincere concern about the future of the ecumenical movement, and about the fate of its goals and ideals, as they were formulated by its founders.

II. Orthodox Concerns

1. The Orthodox Churches want to emphasize that for them, the main aim of the WCC must be the restoration of the unity of the Church. This aim does not exclude relating church unity with the wider unity of humanity and creation. On the contrary, the unity of Christians will contribute more effectively to the unity of humanity and the world. Yet the latter must not happen at the expense of solving issues of faith and

order, which divide Christians. **Visible unity**, in both the faith and the structure of the Church, constitutes a specific goal and must not be taken for granted.

2. The Orthodox note that there has been an **increasing departure from the Basis** of the WCC. The latter has provided the framework for Orthodox participation in the World Council of Churches. Its text is: "The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of Churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit" (Const.) Should the WCC not direct its future work along these lines, it would be in danger of ceasing to be an instrument aiming at the restoration of Christian unity and in that case it would tend to become a forum for an exchange of opinions without any specific Christian theological basis. In such a forum, common prayer will be increasingly difficult, and eventually will become impossible, since even a basic common theological vision will be lacking.

3. The tendency to marginalize the **Basis** in WCC work has created some dangerous trends in the WCC. We miss from many WCC documents the affirmation that Jesus Christ is the world's Saviour. We perceive a growing **departure from biblically-based Christian understandings** of

- a) the Trinitarian God,
- b) salvation,
- c) the "Good News" of the Gospel itself,
- d) human beings as created in the image and likeness of God, and
- e) the Church, as well as some other questions concerning faith.

Our hope is that the results of Faith and Order Commission will find a more prominent place in the various expressions of the WCC, and that tendencies in the opposite direction will not be encouraged. The Orthodox, consequently, attribute special significance to the work of the Faith and Order Commission of the WCC, and view with concern each tendency to undermine its place in the structure of the Council.

4. The Orthodox follow with interest, but also with a certain disquiet, the developments of the WCC towards the broadening of its aims in the direction of **relations with other religions**. The Orthodox support dialogue initiatives, particularly those aiming at the promotion of relations of openness, mutual respect and human cooperation with neighbours of other faiths. When dialogue takes place, Christians are called to bear witness to the integrity of their faith. A genuine dialogue involves greater theological efforts to express the Christian message in ways that speak to the various cultures of our world. All this, however, must occur on the basis of theological criteria which will define the limits of diversity. The biblical faith in God must not be changed. The definition of these criteria is a matter of theological study, and must constitute the first priority of the WCC in view of its desired broadening of aims.

5. Thus, it is with alarm that the Orthodox have heard some presentations on the theme of this

Assembly. With reference to the theme of the Assembly, the Orthodox still await the final texts. However, they observe that some people tend to affirm with very great ease the presence of the Holy Spirit in many movements and developments without discernment. The Orthodox wish to stress the factor of sin and error, which exists in every human action, and separate the Holy Spirit from these. We must guard against a tendency to substitute a "private" spirit, the spirit of the world or other spirits for the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father and rests in the Son. Our tradition is rich in respect for local and national cultures, but we find it impossible to invoke the spirits of "earth, air, water and sea creature". Pneumatology is inseparable from Christology or from the doctrine of the Holy Trinity confessed by the Church on the basis of Divine Revelation.

6. The Orthodox are sorry that their position with regard to eucharistic communion has not been understood by many members of the WCC, who regard the Orthodox as unjustifiably insisting upon **abstinence from eucharistic communion**. The Orthodox once more invite their brothers and sisters in the WCC to understand that it is a matter of **unity in faith and fundamental Orthodox ecclesiology**, and not a question of triumphalistic stance.

For the Orthodox, the Eucharist is the supreme expression of unity and not a means toward unity. The present situation in the ecumenical movement is for us an experience of the cross of Christian division. In this regard, the question of the ordination of women to the priestly and episcopal offices must also be understood within a theological and ecclesiological context.

7. Finally, our concern is also directed to the **changing of the decision-making process** in the WCC. While the system of quotas has benefits, it may also create problems. As the Orthodox we see changes that seem to increasingly weaken the possibility of an Orthodox witness, in an otherwise Protestant international organization. We believe that this tendency is to the harm of the ecumenical effort.

8. For the Orthodox gathered at this Assembly, these and other tendencies and developments question the **very nature and identity of the Council**, as described in the Toronto Statement. In this sense the present Assembly in Canberra appears to be a crucial point in the history of the ecumenical movement.

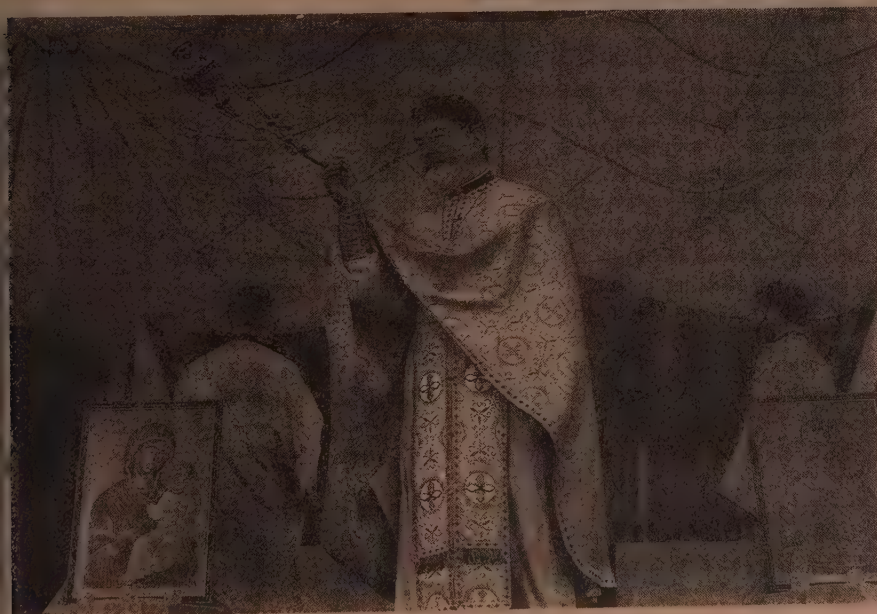
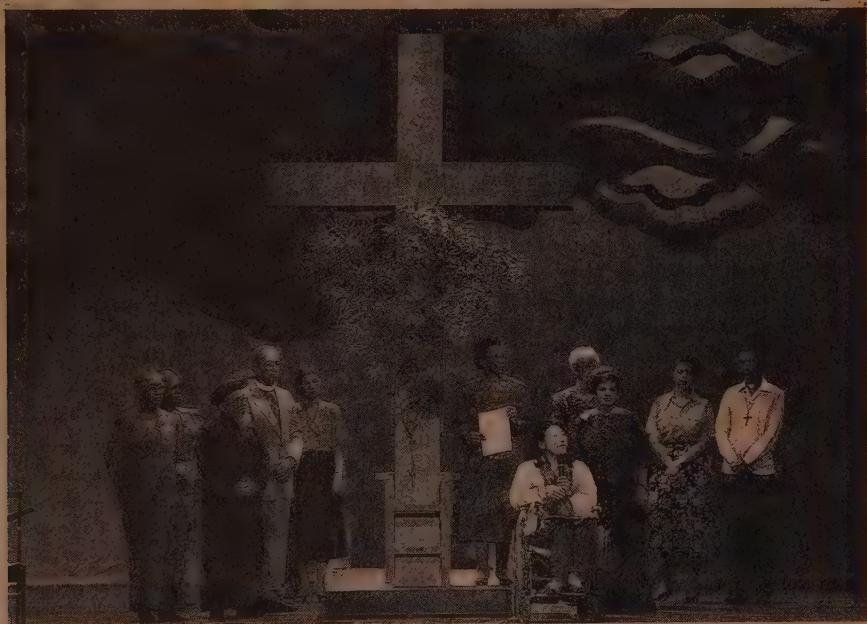
We must, therefore ask ourselves: "**Has the time come for the Orthodox Churches and other member-Churches to review their relations with the World Council of Churches?**"

We pray the Holy Spirit to help all Christians to renew their commitment to visible unity.



In the presidium of the Assembly plenary meeting: Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Myra (Constantinople Patriarchate), Rev. Dr. Emilio Castro, WCC General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Heinz Held, WCC Central Committee moderator

At the Assembly plenary meeting, dedicated to the decade of solidarity with women, February 15



During the divine service, February 7, 1991, VII WCC Assembly opening day

STATEMENT

of the VII Assembly of the World Council of Churches on the Situation in West Ukraine

Changes in legislation in the Soviet Union over the recent period mean new freedoms for Christian communities previously denied full expression of their faith. However, one disturbing result in West Ukraine arising from these developments has been increasing confrontation between local Orthodox congregations and Catholics of the Eastern Rite (Uniates). In many instances, these confrontations have led to violent clashes, and the forcible occupation by Uniates of churches formerly used as places of worship by Orthodox congregations.

Such actions, often occurring with the apparent acquiescence of the Uniate hierarchy and of the local authorities, are not only fomenting community strife

and hatred, but are also hindering the proper exercise of ministry.

In expressing our profound concern, we call upon all the parties concerned at all levels

- to seek ways of resolving their differences by engaging in patient negotiation in a spirit of reconciliation, mutual respect, and Christian love and call upon our member-Churches
- to pray for the leaders and people of both the Orthodox and Uniate communities in West Ukraine, that they may seek and find peaceful solutions to their difficulties, remembering that each is engaged in a dialogue leading to the recognition of the other as part of the body of Christ.



During the prayer



In the Assembly plenary meetings hall



Delegates of the Russian Orthodox Church, participating in the VII WCC Assembly, headed by Archbishop (now Metropolitan) Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad

The Second Meeting of the Commission for Cooperation Between the Church of England and the Russian Orthodox Church

From January 23 to 29, 1991, representatives of the Church of England were in the Soviet Union at the invitation of the Russian Orthodox Church to participate in the second meeting of the Joint Coordinating Commission for Bilateral Cooperation. The Anglican delegation was made up of the Rt. Rev. Richard Harris, Lord Bishop of Oxford, Canon Stephen Platten, the Archbishop of Canterbury's Secretary for Ecumenical Affairs, the Revs. Richard Chartres and Paul Kennington.

On January 24 Bishop Richard and his colleagues were received by His Holiness Patriarch Aleksy II of Moscow and All Russia in his residence at St. Daniel's Monastery.

On the same day the Church of England delegation visited the Department for External Church Relations and met its Head, Archbishop (now Metropolitan) Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad.

The work of the Joint Coordinating Commission took place in Estonia at the Pükhtitsa Convent of the Dormition of the Holy Virgin on January 25-27. The participants from the Russian Orthodox Church were Father Ioann Ekonomtsev, Deputy Head of the Department for External Church Relations, and V. Chukalov, a staff member of the Department.

Discussions of questions of bilateral cooperation were continued and concrete steps towards the practical implementation of such cooperation were suggested.

The delegates paid great attention to issues of inter-Church cooperation in the realms of Christian charity and social activity in the light of the new possibilities open to the Russian Orthodox Church.

It was agreed to arrange bilateral theological discussions in 1992.

During their stay at the Pükhtitsa Convent the Church of England delegation attended services, got

acquainted with the life of the convent and met its Mother Superior, Hegumene Varvara, and the sisters.

On January 28 the delegation arrived in Leningrad and visited churches and places of cultural interest.

The British guests had a meeting with the Rector of the Leningrad Theological Academy, Archpriest Prof. Vladimir Sorokin, visited the Academy church and were shown the library and other premises belonging to the theological schools.

The guests also visited the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in the St. Aleksandr Nevsky Lavra where they venerated the relics of St. Serafim of Sarov, and St. Ioann's Church of the Pükhtitsa Convent's podvory in Leningrad.

On January 29 the visitors were shown some of the sights of Moscow. A farewell dinner in honour of the members of the Joint Coordinating Commission was held.

The next meeting of the Commission will be held in Great Britain in May 1992.

The Enthronement of the Archbishop of Canterbury

On April 19, 1991, His Grace Dr. George Carey was enthroned at the Canterbury Cathedral as Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of All England and Metropolitan.

Dr. Carey was born in Dagenham (England). When he left school he served for two years in the Royal Air Force and then worked at the Ministry of Electrification in London. Later, Dr. Carey began to think about ministry in the Church. He studied at the London Theological College which was subsequently transferred to Nottingham and is now known as St. John's College.

His priestly career has included parish service and a teaching position at a theological college. He was the parish priest of St. Nicholas' Church, Durham, for four years. During this period the Church was renovated and rebuilt. Dr. Carey has described his parish



experience in a book "The Church in the Market Place," which like his other theological works has been widely acclaimed.

In 1982 Dr. Carey became the Principal of the Trinity College, Bristol. Many people from different countries studied at the college and Dr. Carey made a particular effort to acquaint himself with the culture and traditions of the various nationalities.

In 1987 Dr. Carey was made Bishop of Bath and Wells, an ancient see in the west of England. His elevation to the dignity of Archbishop was somewhat unexpected, but has been welcomed with joy and enthusiasm.

Dr. Carey is of the Evangelical tradition and in both theological and social issues does justice to liberal theologians. He is a well-known supporter of the ordination of women.

CHRONICLE

Visit of Bishop Mark Herly. On January 23-30, 1991, the USSR was visited by Mark Herly, a Catholic bishop from Santa Rosa (USA), member of the Consultative Council of the Foundation for the Blind, functioning in Vatican now. On his arrival in Moscow on January 23 the guest had a meeting with Archbishop Kliment of Kaluga and Borovsk, Deputy Head of the Department for External Church Relations. Bishop M. Herly, who had previously sent equipment for the blind to all the USSR Republics, was familiarized with the work of the institutions for the blind and deaf-and-dumb in this country. He visited the Institute for the

Study of Mental Defects and Physical Handicaps (ISMDPH) school for the blind and deaf-and-dumb in Zagorsk, school for the deaf-and-dumb at the ISMDPH, and boarding school No. 1 for the blind in Moscow. Bishop Herly also saw church and cultural sights of Moscow, and visited the Trinity-St. Sergy Lavra. Before his departure, on January 29, Bishop Herly had a meeting with Hegumen Innokenty Pavlov, Secretary of the Patriarchal and Synodal Bible Commission.

Interreligious Meeting in Moscow. On February 4, in the premises of the Soviet Peace Committee, an interreligious

meeting of all the religions and confessions represented in Moscow, was held. At the meeting a vital necessity was stressed to organize in the nearest future an interreligious consultative council, dealing with the problems of and initiatives for the improvement of the relations between the Churches and religions in the USSR. Archpriest Aleksandr Kozha, head of the interreligious relations section of the DECR, participated in the meeting.

Theoretical science conference. On February 5-6 in Moscow in the premises of the Academy of Social Sciences a theoretical scientific conference "The Soviets and the Principle of the Separation of Powers", organized by the Association of Political Sciences of the USSR, was held. Archpriest Aleksandr Kozha, head of the interreligious section of the DECR, participated in the conference. He made a report in "Religion and Politics" panel.

At the constituent conference. On December 19 a constituent conference of the Soviet Association For Dialogue and Cooperation in the Asian-Pacific Ocean Region was held. At the conference Archpriest Aleksandr Kozha, head

of the interreligious section of the DECR was elected member of the executive committee.

Prelate Dr. A. Rauch's visit. On February 8-10 Moscow was visited by Prelate Dr. Albert Rauch, Director of the Regensburg Institute for Eastern Churches. He arrived in Moscow from Kiev where he had participated in the handing-over of the humanitarian aid, brought to the Ukrainian capital from Germany. In the Department for External Church Relations Dr. Albert Rauch had a meeting with Hieromonk Feodosy Vasnev, DECR staff member. During the conversation the prelate stressed the importance of preserving and developing contacts between the Russian Orthodox Church and the German Bishops' Conference. He called the education of the Moscow Patriarchate students in the Regensburg Institute for Eastern Churches an important part of the cooperation. He also stressed that the Institute is ready to admit the Russian Church students. Dr. A. Rauch and persons accompanying him were shown round the architectural ensemble of St. Daniel's Monastery.

COMMUNIQUE of the World Bible Conference in Minsk

From January 26 to 31, 1991, the world Church study conference devoted to the problems of modern Church Slavonic biblical texts and the Eastern Slavonic biblical translations was held by the Byelorussian Orthodox Church under the direction of His Eminence Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk and Grodno, Chairman of the Byelorussian Bible Commission.

The conference was organized by the Byelorussian Bible Commission jointly with the Patriarchal and Synodal Bible Commission, the North-Western Bible Commission and the Federation of Bible Societies.

Together with theologians and secular experts, the clergy representing the Byelorussian Orthodox Church, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and the Cheboksary Diocese took an active part in the conference work.

The conference considered the diverse aspects of the following three problems:

1. The new translation of the Bible into the Byelorussian language begun by the Byelorussian Orthodox Church.

2. The Church Slavonic Bible translation.

3. The Synodal Russian Bible translation now being improved.

Within the framework of the conference its participants, the representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church, had an opportunity to get acquainted with modern Western methods of study of biblical texts and of making new Bible translations. A group of Leningrad experts informed the participants in the conference of their work on translating the New Testament into the Russian language.

The work of the conference proceeded in conformity with the directions set out in the joint statement of the Bible commission approved by the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church on October 15, 1990, entitled: "Initial principles of work on the Eastern Slavonic Bible texts in the Russian Orthodox Church."

The participants arrived at an agreement on the following questions:

1. Today priority trends in the Russian biblical work must be the ones directly bound with the solution of urgent tasks facing the Church in implementing her

mission in modern conditions, in particular the task of spiritual enlightenment. That is why the leading role of the Church in the work on the original and translated Bible texts is of particular importance.

2. Utmost support must be given to the work begun and being carried out under Church leadership on the new translation of the Holy Scriptures into the Byelorussian language. All our help must also be given to the development of cooperation between the Byelorussian Orthodox Church and representatives of Byelorussian science, literature, and culture in carrying out the work. Any assistance given by the Federation of Bible Societies in this work will be appreciated.

3. One of the most urgent tasks for the Russian Orthodox Church in these days (proceeding from the presence in some regions of Slavonic and Russian bilingualism, and in others—of Slavonic-Russian-national trilingualism) is to preserve Church Slavonic Bible texts used in Orthodox divine service, and, at the same time, to take measures enabling the wide masses of believers to use the Church Slavonic Bible. In this connection it is necessary both to improve Church Slavonic Bible texts and to publish editions with parallel Church Slavonic and Russian (or other national language) Bible texts.

4. Support must be given to the work being carried out with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Aleksy II of Moscow and All Russia of introducing certain improvements into the Synodal Russian Bible translation. At the same time it is absolutely necessary that this work, among other things, may draw closer the Synodal Russian Bible translation to the Church Slavonic translation insofar as the norms of the Russian literary language permit. Stressed also must be the fact that the Synodal Russian Bible translation as a common Church and national heritage deserves deep respect and every attention, and that it has great ecumenical significance since it has been recognized by Russian-language representatives of all confessions in our country.

5. The Bible commissions must do everything possible to make access to the Word of God easier for all na-

tions of our country. One possible means of promoting this would be the creation jointly by the three commissions and with the aid of the Federation of Bible Societies, of a special Russian Bible text of the type of "translation for translators".

6. Bearing in mind the fact that the biblical work has already united representatives of two Slavonic nations of our country, the Russian and Byelorussian, it must be stated with satisfaction that representatives of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church participated in the conference. The members of the Bible commissions must be ready to aid their colleagues in the Ukraine

who may come across problems common to all Eastern Slavonic nations in their work on Bible texts.

7. It must be always remembered that the biblical situation, in the Russian Orthodox Church and in our country as a whole, has specific features and in many ways is incomparable to biblical situations in other Churches abroad and in other countries, and because of this special importance must be attached to the preservation and development of Eastern Slavonic Bible traditions.

January 31, 1991
Minsk

The Orthodox Christian Service

(The essence of divine service, its inner properties,
component parts and moral significance)

By Orthodox Christian service we mean the special orders (rules) of service, followed by the hierarchy in conducting ecclesiastical rites which have as their purpose the satisfaction of the highest needs of the redeemed and newed human spirit.¹

It follows from this definition that:

1) True divine service has become possible on Earth since the Redemption of man accomplished by our Lord Jesus Christ.

2) True divine service is possible only in the Church, which is invisibly administered by Christ our Saviour, and inspired by the Holy Spirit, and which is the only visible organizer and preserver of the orders of divine service.

3) True divine service is closely and intimately related to the perfecting and moral rebirth of both the individual and the whole of mankind, and therefore a correct and profound understanding of divine service can only be achieved through a profound understanding of Christianity in general and of Christian doctrine and moral teachings in particular.

4) The principal services to which the believers must turn to acquire a knowledge of the provenance of the essence and basic properties of divine service are the same as those for gaining an understanding of Christianity in general, i. e. Holy Scripture (as the Revelation of our Lord God Himself) and Holy Tradition (as the voice of the Universal Church). The information provided by these sources should be provable and controllable, testifying to the inner religious experience of every person.

5) The method of studying divine service—as a science—must be historical and archaeological with regard to its forms, and critico-psychological with regard to the content both of its offices *in toto* and of their separate parts.

Jesus Christ is the founder of the true (New Testament) divine service.²

Christ our Saviour considered the institution of the divine service as one of the most important features of His great work of saving mankind.

Foreseeing that the celebration of the first, in time and dignity, divine service would be possible only in the last hours of His sojourn amongst His disciples, Christ our Saviour began from the very first year of His public ministry to instil in the hearts and minds of His followers an awareness of the necessity for participation in the new divine service, leading them by gradual and successive stages to a comprehension of the essence of the new means of regenerating human souls through grace.³

In His discourse with Nicodemus, the Jew learned in the Law and a member of the Sanhedrin, whom He initiated into the mystery of His Person and the mission He had undertaken Christ our Saviour insisted on the necessity for the human spirit to be renewed and reborn in baptism by water through the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit, and expressed His profound sorrow that the spirit enslaved by sin was unable to perceive the truth of His teaching.⁴

Shortly thereafter in His talk with the Samaritan woman, Christ our Saviour, revealing to her His Messianic dignity and the beginning of a new life for mankind, spoke of the institution of a new divine service as a distinguishing feature of this new life, and stressed that through divine service the human spirit, guided by the Holy Spirit and Christ our Saviour—the Heavenly Truth—would be able to satisfy its highest needs.⁵

Subsequently, when the people's faith in Christ as Prophet and Teacher from Heaven had grown so strong that it became possible to elect the twelve Apostles and to give the people a detailed explanation of the basis of the new moral life, Christ our Saviour took care to point out the distinguishing features of true prayer and true divine service. Just as in private domestic prayer, which, in the words of Christ our Saviour, should be a supremely sincere and elevated act, devoid of any selfish and egoistic motives, with the human spirit surging towards God, so in public divine service the souls of all the congregation should surge heavenwards. Public divine service is distinguished by the peace and love felt

for one another by the members of the congregation (cf. Mt. 6. 5—6; 5. 23—24).

A year before His Passion, Christ our Saviour gave a clear and exact definition of the essence of Christian divine service in His discourse on the Bread of Life.⁶ He held this discourse in Galilee, whose inhabitants were ready, after the great number of miracles Christ had performed, to acclaim Him as Prophet and Teacher from Heaven. He talked in the synagogue, i. e. in the presence of the zealots and guardians of the Law, the day after He had fed the multitude of five thousand in the desert with five loaves, and had performed the miracle of walking on the water and had saved the drowning Apostle Peter. On hearing from the lips of the Teacher from God, the Great Miracle Worker, the teaching that He was the Bread of Life, which gives Life Eternal to all who partake of Him, the regular attendants of the synagogue declared this doctrine a heresy, became enraged and remarked angrily: *Is not this Jesus ... whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?* and, of course, they did not wish to listen to Him further.

Not only did Christ our Saviour not attempt to disabuse them of their misunderstanding, but He affirmed, on the contrary, that whosoever shall not eat His Flesh and drink His Blood, shall not have life in themselves, and noted in explanation of their unbelief that only He Who has not suppressed the needs of his God-like soul, and therefore is receptive to the influence of the Godhead, is capable of seeing the truth of His words, while His words will be alien to those who observe only the exterior, ritualistic side of religious life. On hearing Christ our Saviour reaffirm His earlier saying about the need to partake of His Body and Blood, even certain of His disciples said: *This is an hard saying: who can hear it?* and, as the Evangelist notes, left Christ. Only the Twelve Apostles remained with Christ and these were silent, finding no words to express their consternation. Thereupon Christ asked them: *Will ye also go away?* The meaning of His question was as follows: even should you leave Me, what I have said remains unchanged. In answer Peter the Apostle cried out on behalf of all: *Lord to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.* In other words, St. Peter hastened to demonstrate to his beloved Teacher that although they, like the worshippers in the synagogue and those disciples that had left Him, were powerless to understand and therefore to accept rationally His new teaching, so great was their love for Christ, Whom they had already acclaimed as the Messiah, that they were content to accept His words without straining their minds to understand them, and nourished the hope of penet-

rating their mystery under the influence of His Divine Word. Christ our Saviour responded tersely: *Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?* The Evangelist notes that Jesus Christ was referring to Judas Iscariot, who was thinking of betraying Him.

With this forewarning, Christ our Saviour clearly bore witness to the fact that in speaking of the Bread of Life, He was thinking of His last days of life on earth when the Apostles were actually to partake of the Holy Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, when the Eucharistic Sacrifice would be so closely connected in time with the Mystery of the Golgotha Sacrifice. At the same time this forewarning was meant to serve His disciples as a sign that the moment of their partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ was drawing near and to inspire them to attend closer to their inner religious state and attitude to their Teacher. Christ intended that His Apostles' souls should be filled with awe whenever they turned their thoughts towards this Great Sacrament.

There can be no doubt but that the words of Christ our Saviour made the most profound impression on the souls of His disciples, and were the object of their serious and agitated thoughts. The following facts are attested to in the Gospel with remarkable consistency and force: 1) Peter's confession of Christ as the Son of God, 2) Christ our Saviour's promise to found the Church, and 3) the prayer given at the request of the disciples. Evidently, these facts had the closest inner connection. The Apostles' firm faith and ardent love demanded their complete union with God, and required that they give this love and faith expression in words of praise, glorification, prayer and thanksgiving. The wonderful prayer given by our Lord to His Apostles to satisfy the needs of their awakened souls taught the Apostles* to pray that they be given the promised Bread of Life as soon as possible, and thereby strengthened in them their desire to partake of this Bread.⁷

It is noteworthy that when the time came for the institution of the divine service, the Apostles—namely, Peter and John—turned to Christ with the question: *Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?* Although talking specifically about the Old Testament Passover the Apostles were perhaps—albeit subconsciously—referring to the Passover of the New Law. With His answer, Christ the Saviour leads the Apostles to an apprehension of this new thought within themselves. Christ says as

* The Lord's Prayer expresses in brief all our hopes — Sermon by Ioann of Smolensk. See our publication *Christian Hope*. Tambov, 1910, p. 5.

it were: "To partake of the New Passover it is essential to have a profound and sincere faith in Me as God, to feel ardent love for Me as the Saviour of the World, and to be totally dedicated to Me as the leader in life. If you have all these, go and prepare."

The Apostles showed that they possessed all that was pointed out as necessary, therefore, without asking a single question to elucidate the meaning of their Teacher's indefinite words about the place where they were to celebrate the Passover, they went off and soon returned to say that all was ready. Through the act of washing the feet⁸, as it states in the canticle for the Holy Week, the eleven Apostles were initiated into the mystery of the New Passover, and only Judas Iscariot remained with his treacherous plan to betray their Teacher.

With His ability to see into the hearts of men Christ could see the state of the soul of His fallen disciple, suffered greatly over his plight and determined to warn him once again of the danger of eternal damnation by calling the promise He had made earlier about the Bread of Life, and by demonstrating His love and concern for Judas as a friend.⁹

Overcoming His deep perturbation, Christ our Saviour said, as the Evangelist bears witness: *...One of you shall betray me*, and with these words He recalled to His disciples His words about the Bread of Life, the promise of the Sacrament of the Eucharist, which He had given the previous year in Galilee, in the synagogue, and with this they also recalled all the circumstances of that discourse.¹⁰ Dipping a piece of bread in the cup Christ gave it to Judas. This was the final test of the Apostle's conscience, and he proved unequal to it; he denounced Christ, received the Devil into his soul and abandoned forever the newly-emerging community.

In the upper room on Zion, only Christ's true friends¹¹, seized with holy fear, remained with Him, and He with them, as the Eternal Chief Priest. Glorifying God the Father, the Creator of the World, for bringing about the salvation of mankind¹², Christ blessed the bread and the wine mixed with water, broke the bread and said out loud: *Take, eat; this is my body*, and passing them the cup He added: *Take this, and divide it among yourselves: for this is my blood... this do in remembrance of me*. Overcome with awe and in deeply pious silence the Apostles partook of the Holy Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ and thus were united in the closest possible way with Christ their God. Thus the supreme mystery of the recreation of mankind and its reunion with its Creator and God took place. Egoism, the basic rule of life, was rejected and the law of perfect love accepted; the mind was subordinated

to faith, and vague human conjectures were replaced by purest contemplation.

The Apostles represented that *little leaven* which, in the words of Christ the Saviour, was to leaven *the whole lump* of mankind. Regarding His work as accomplished, Christ the Saviour cried in triumph: *Now is the Son of man glorified and God is glorified in him* (Jn. 13. 31)¹³. Thereupon He made haste to initiate His Apostles into the hidden mysteries of His mission and the inner life of the Godhead. Calling the Apostles His *little children* (cekvia), Christ the Saviour bade them always keep love as the basic law of life, and as the normal relationship among themselves and with all those who believe in Him through their word; He told them not to lose heart in the face of calamity and suffering, but to fortify themselves with their memories of Him, taking consolation in their hope for a quick and joyous meeting with Him, and the reception into their hearts of the Comforter the Holy Spirit. Who would instruct them in all the truths and open the future to them.

Finally, as a sign of His infinite and perfect love for them, Christ the Saviour lets the Apostles witness of His prayer as the Chief Priest, to God the Father* a prayer inimitable in the power of its words and feelings, a prayer of Love. All these words engraved in letters of fire in the heart of the Apostles and acts of Christ our Saviour had but one purpose: to sustain the Apostles at the exalted height of faith, love and hope to which they had been uplifted on partaking of the Holy Sacrament of His Body and Blood, and to make this exalted state a daily and vital property of the Apostles' spirit.

The days following immediately after the Last Supper and including the Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, serve as irrefutable evidence of the power and significance of the fact of the Apostles' partaking of the Holy Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ at the Last Supper.

The Omnipotent God the Word, to borrow the words of the hymn composed by St. John of Damascus, "healed the minds of the Apostles from sin and prepared for Himself a clean abode: for now [at Pentecost] the light of the Spirit Who is equal and consubstantial with Him, will abide in them."¹⁴

Thus, the words of Christ our Saviour and facts of Gospel history can be taken as the basis for the following general conclusion concerning the provenance, essence, essential properties and component parts of Christian divine service.

* The Chief Priest's Prayer is the same in form as that given earlier to the Apostles, differing merely in the strength of its wording and feeling, as the prayer of the Only-Begotten Son Consubstantial with the Father in the Godhead.

The foundation of New Testament divine service was laid by our Lord Jesus Christ with His institution and celebration of Holy Eucharist.¹⁵ The essence of divine service—the Eucharist—is the actual union of all believers in Christ, and through Him with the Triune God and with one another. The primary inner properties of divine service are its psychological necessity and life-giving power of grace. Its main component parts: the preparation of the faithful for participation in the Eucharist and the celebration of the Eucharist (with exhortation to the participants in it to preserve the lofty spiritual state appropriate to communicants in the Godhead through specific lessons, prayers and various ritualistic acts).

The Twelve Apostles were the first to organize the ecclesiastical divine service. The Twelve Apostles were the chosen ones of Christ our Saviour. Their activities were directly linked to the activities of their Teacher not only in time, but also in place. According to the Testament of Christ our Saviour, they were to take as the object of their pastoral care and work the unwitting crucifiers of Christ, who, prior to this, had been witnesses to many of His words and deeds. It was the Apostles' task to tell these unfortunate ones of the Resurrection of Christ and thereby to complete in them the inner process of renewal and rebirth, initiated under the direct influence of Christ our Saviour Himself and arrested by the weakness of their own faith and the strength of the Devil's temptations. The Apostles were to stabilize the faith of the vacillating with their own firm faith and to kindle the fire of love in the hearts of the lukewarm with their own ardent love for Christ Crucified. Divine service was therefore the element in which those who previously had been the enemies of Christ were to be remoulded into His devoted friends. We do not have a written account of the views of the Twelve Apostles of the essence of Christian divine service and therefore must draw conclusions from facts stated in the Acts of the Apostles.¹⁶ St. Luke the Evangelist describes the account of the Holy Apostles' life of which he is the author as a continuation of his own Gospel, containing an account of the commencement of the ministry of Christ our Saviour, Who acted through the Apostles. In this way the Evangelist justifies, as it were, his failure to describe the Apostles' basic views of Christ's work, for the Apostles regarded everything in the way that they had been taught by Christ their Lord. It follows that they shared their Teacher's view of divine service.

In the second chapter of the Acts, St. Luke describes the divine service, for the edification of the Church, held after the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles. From this description it is possible to form conclusions about the

Apostles' view of divine service.

On the day of Pentecost, immediately after the descent of the Holy Spirit, Apostle Peter begins his sermon addressed to the assembled Jews, who had only recently witnessed and participated in the world's greatest Crime—the Crucifixion of the innocent Christ—with the words: "He that you have crucified is risen again. The Apostle went on to astound his listeners with a series of comparisons between the prophecies of the prophets of old and recent events, and pierced them to their hearts: those who but recently were blasphemers entered into a new spiritual state, and sensing new needs besought the Apostle in deep humility and complete submission to teach them what they should do. The Apostle showed them the only possible way, saying: *Repent (meravoumoare), and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call... And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation* (Acts 2. 38-40). On that day three thousand believers were baptized and joined the Church.

Cleansed from their previous sins these new pure followers of the Crucified Christ were to become the recipients of the Apostles' special attention and instruction, for the seeds of a new life had been planted in them. These newly-enlightened believers remained constantly by the Apostles' side, drawn by the force of their inspired preaching and their living example to an understanding of the mystery of the Person of Jesus Christ the Saviour and of the new life of grace in their close union with Christ the Lord in the Sacrament of Eucharist. Filled with profound faith (in the simplicity of their heart) and with holy trepidation (in their joy) these new converts partook of the Holy Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, experiencing inner communion in Christ their Lord and feeling the need for total unanimity with all those that believed and surrendering all their property to the common weal (Acts 4. 32-37).

It can be seen from a correct description of the divine service that of all the rites which make it up, in its true Christian sense, performed in the home, the breaking of the Bread or the celebration of the Eucharist was the supreme and most important act, as instituted by our Lord Himself, as the Sacrament which leads believers into close communion with Christ and the Church. It was the focal point of the entire Liturgy, and these services, the meetings at home, were held, properly speaking, for the breaking of the Bread: by the breaking of the Bread they were defined and characterized; and de-

rived their name. All the other rites, such as lessons, prayers, etc. were subsidiary acts in comparison with the breaking of the Bread; they encompassed the Eucharist and served as preparatory and concluding acts.¹⁷

Bishop Khristofor Smirnov reaches identical conclusions about the views of the Apostles (and in particular St. John the Divine) on the essence and significance of divine service, as he writes in his article, "The Apocalypse as a Liturgical Monument of the Apostolic Age". Quoting the passage from the Revelation: *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me* (Rev. 3. 20), and the words: *blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb* (Rev. 19. 9), Bishop Khristofor says: "It would be hard to give a clearer and more graphic picture of the essence of the Eucharist, in which Christ Himself, the living God-Man, enters into the inner temple of man, as once He had entered in and dined with the publicans and sinners".

Analyzing the Revelation with the aim of highlighting its liturgical element, Bishop Khristofor writes: "We cannot but agree that the seer, contemplating and conceiving the living link and unity of the Churches Militant and Triumphant in the images he is offered by contemporary Church life, particularly the divine service, wishes by the same token to conceive an ideal image of the Church of Christ as a great Sacrament of universal historical significance; to show that the Church's task consists in transfiguring, redeeming, and sanctifying the world, in its reunion with the heavenly world that she performs this great task through the agency of divine service, through the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist, and that, finally, the fate of the world, as well as the fate of the Church herself depends on the fulfilment of this task".¹⁸

The Apostle Paul was the first celebrant and interpreter of the divine service for heathen converts to Christianity. St. Paul occupied a quite exceptional position in the Early Church. He was not one of the disciples of Christ, but was called personally by Christ Himself and made His Apostle, after the Church had already been founded; he had not been a friend of Christ our Saviour during His public ministry, but he was honoured by Christ, when called to be His Apostle, with many revelations. By dint of his exceptional position and the nature of his pastoral work St. Paul was obliged to establish a firm link between his own activity and that of the Twelve Apostles, and to keep his teaching in conformity with theirs. The other Apostles themselves recognized the necessity for the establishment of such a connection and the demonstration of the unity of their views.

Consequently special significance attaches to St. Paul's view of the essence of divine service, of its properties, substance and meaning, as the intermediary view between that of Christ Himself and that of the Church proper.

The best idea of his views can be gained from the account of the divine service he conducted in Troas, and from his numerous exhortations to the members of the Corinthian Church, occasioned by the disorganization the Apostle had observed in their community. St. Luke gives an account of St. Paul's celebration of divine service in Troas in the Acts, Chapter 20.

NOTES

¹ In his manual on Liturgics for theological seminaries Ye. NESTEROVSKY, a teacher at the Kursk Theological Seminary, gives the following definition of divine service: "Christian divine service is taken to mean the totality of definite rites and rituals instituted by Jesus Christ and the Holy Apostles and revealed by the Holy Church, by means of which the redeemed society expresses its faith in God and in the Redemption He has granted them, and God on His part imparts to the Christian Divine Grace; communion with God and sanctification through his assimilation of the grace-endowing fruits of the Redemption accomplished by the Son of God," and further on Nesterovsky writes: "The essence of Christian divine service can be summed up as follows: it is the free expression of the highest needs of the redeemed and renewed human spirit under the influence of Divine Spirit." (Ye. NESTEROVSKY. *Liturgics or the Theory of the Divine Service of the Orthodox Church*. Moscow, 1909, pp. 6, 23).

We were not satisfied with the definition quoted above, although it is the best of those we know, and hence we have formulated our own.

² In our discussion of Christ's view of divine service we have taken as our point of departure the book by Prof. I. GUMILEVSKY: *Christian Divine Service in the Light of Christ's Teaching (The Gospel Basis of Cults)*. Sergiev Posad, 1916, 3rd edition.

³ The inner ideological link connecting the different facts in the Gospel history is given in detail in the brochure: A. NECHAEV. *The Link Between the Teaching of the Salvation and the Dogma of the Two Natures, the Divine and Human, Hypostatically United in the Person of Jesus Christ*. Tambov, 1907, pp. 24-30; Tambov, 1905, pp. 5-9.

⁴ A. NECHAEV. *Jesus Christ's Discourse with Nicodemus*. Tambov, 1907, pp. 13-19 and 34-38.

⁵ BISHOP MIKHAIL. *The Commentated Gospel*, part 3, the Gospel According to St. John, p. 138; cf. Jn. 14. 6. *Spiritually Improving Reading*, 1849, October. I. PYATNITSKY. *The Institution of the New Testament Divine Service by Our Lord Jesus Christ*, p. 173.

⁶ In our discussion of this problem we were guided by in addition to the Gospel, the books: N. AKVALONOV. *Jesus Christ's Discourse on the True Bread of Life*, from the journal *The Wanderer* 1894-1895; I. PYATNITSKY. *op cit* 1879, October, November; D. I. BOGDASHEVSKY. *The Last Supper of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Transactions of the Kiev Theological Academy*, 1906, October.

⁷ St. Cyprian of Carthage in his book on the Lord's Prayer says of the words "Give us this day our daily bread": "This can be taken both in a spiritual and a direct sense, because both the one and the other bread are the divinely granted concomitants of salvation. First, the Bread of Life is Christ—this Bread is not for everyone, it is for us alone! Just as we say: Our Father, because God is Father only

of those who know him and believe in Him, so do we use the expression 'our bread', because Christ is the Bread only of those who constitute His Body. We ask Him to give us this bread every day, and in this way pray that we who are in Christ and daily receive the Eucharist in the food of salvation may avoid committing any grievous sin for which we may be excommunicated and deprived of this Bread of Heaven and thereby severed from the Body of Christ, as Christ Himself says and teaches: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven..." (Jn. 6. 51). (Collected Early Liturgies in Russian Translation. St. Petersburg, 1874, pp. 65-66); exactly the same interpretation of the 4th petition in the Lord's Prayer is given by Tertullian and St. Cyril of Jerusalem, see F. SMIRNOV. *Christian Divine Service from the Time of the Apostles to the 4th Century*. Transactions of the Kiev Theological Academy, 1875, July, p. 65, August, p. 313.

⁸ P. MIRONOSITSKY. *The Open and the Hidden in Liturgical Hymns*. St. Petersburg, 1913, p. 49.

⁹ D. BOGDASHEVSKY. *Op. cit.*

¹⁰ I. PYATNITSKY. *Op. cit.*, 1879, November, p. 297.

¹¹ D. BOGDASHEVSKY. *Op. cit.*

¹² I. PYATNITSKY. *Op. cit.*, p. 309.

¹³ The edition of the New Testament published by the Holy Synod in Greek and Church Slavonic in 1861 refers the words "egda izyde" (now went out) to Verse 31 which reads "When Judas was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified...", while the 1890 edition refers the words in question to the previous verse, as an indication of the time when Judas left.

¹⁴ Prof. Ye. LOVYAGIN. *Liturgical Canons in Russian and Church Slavonic*, p. 104.

¹⁵ I. PYATNITSKY. *Op. cit.*, p. 296.

¹⁶ A. NECHAEV. *Op. cit.*, part 1, pp. 493-560, part 2, pp. 77-155. We availed ourselves of this literature in our discussion of the Holy Apostles' views of divine service.

¹⁷ I. PYATNITSKY. *The Formation and Development of Christian Divine Service in the Early Church under the Apostles*. Spiritual Reading, 1880, Book 2, pp. 185-186.

¹⁸ Transactions of the Kiev Theological Academy. 1874, Vol. IV, pp. 111 and 115.

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Principles of Russian Church Art

"What is churchliness? It is a new life, a life in the Spirit. What is the criterion of authenticity of this life? It is Beauty. Yes, There is a special spiritual beauty, which, being indescribable in terms of logical formulae, is at the same time the only true way of deciding what is Orthodox and what is not" (1). This criterion opens the way to the sources of religious life, without deadening them by reasoning, and giving the strength to ascend from images to the Prototypes, to the ever-living world of creative Paradigms, united in the Divine Logos. It makes it possible to avoid abstract monosemantic definitions in fathoming the nature of Russian spirituality and style of piety. From the 9th-11th to the 19th-20th centuries this style, as an objective suprapersonal principle, has been revealing itself in an organic metamorphosis, producing an organizing influence upon the chaotic material supplied by external historical circumstances.

This style requires of a nation and of an individual serving sacrificially the values that are extra-temporal and spiritual. The great manifestations of Russian piety had emerged where the creative force of the Divine Energies broke through the crust of inert matter. Therein lies the ontology of the Russian icon. Imitating its forms, without really understanding and partaking of the over-living force which motivates the world history, can only produce superficial stylization. Having chosen for their criterion Divine Beauty, our forefathers wished to have a reliable guarantee of sound and genuine spiritual life against any deadening over-simplification. This accounts for the endless wealth of forms of

Russian Church life. "Neither a fool-in-Christ, not a pilgrim, Peter the Great, Tolstoy or Dostoyevsky can claim, individually, to express the Russian national genius. And if typization is necessary, and it is necessary to some extent for national selfconsciousness, it can rather rest on the extreme manifestations of the national character as the poles between which lies the whole range of transitional types. The formula of a nation must be dualistic. Only the inner tension of the extremes sustains development, generates progress, this indispensable condition of all life" (2).

Russian national history offers abundant material for formulating a typology of spirituality as it has been revealed in liturgy, asceticism, art, public and family life. The Slavophiles, as representatives of one of the most peculiar trends in Russian thought in the last century, were the first to note that common comprehensive spirit which suffuses all this diversity. In his work "Russia and Europe" N. Ya. Danilevsky traced the specific features of the Slavs as an original cultural and historical type and stressed, on the objective side, the historical destiny of the Russian people, which is "to be the guardian of the living Tradition of the religious truth — of Orthodoxy". On the subjective side, he stressed its "thirst of religious truth as demonstrated both by normal manifestations and also by the distortions of this spiritual striving" (3). The early Slavophiles, as they plunged into the depths of Russian history and Orthodoxy, discovered in them the prerequisites for a comprehensive spiritual life, which was not dominated by any abstract logical reasoning. They dreamed of

a transition from "borrowed systems to the independent love of wisdom, which accords with the basic principles of early Russian education that surpasses Western culture, submitting it to a comprehensive perception of a religious mind" (4). Russian Orthodoxy taught the Slavophiles to perceive faith as the supreme organ on cognition and explained to them many peculiarities of Russian history which are in striking contrast to other types of culture. According to Khomyakov: "faith is the contemplation of an invisible fact which is manifested in a visible fact... it is not an act of cognition divorced from all other faculties but an act of all forces of reason penetrated and captured to its utmost depths by the living truth of a revealed fact. Faith is not only conceived or experienced, but it is both conceived and experienced at one and the same time, in other words — it is not cognition alone but both cognition and life" (5). The strenuous and painful work involved in the emergence of Russian religious consciousness rested on that fundamental intuition of faith, which means that it can not be restricted to speculative theorizing, but requires a life-long exploit which was realized by the startsy of the Optina Hermitage by unknown pilgrims and also by the Russian religious thinkers. The meaning of spiritual life was seen not so much in cultivating some narrow special interests, but in attaining a life in Christ. Then it becomes possible "to communicate a living soul, give life and wholeness to the torn and mortified humanity by uniting it with the eternal Divine Source" (6). This is also the starting point of the

philosophy of V. S. Soloviev which is rooted in the soil cultivated by the faith of the fathers" with its assertion of the wholeness of knowledge. This also accounts for the understanding of sin as a force that causes disintegration in all vital processes and at any level of being. It was not accidental that M. Dostoevsky perceived the forms of life void of spirituality as "uncomely", and the bearer of "comeliness" is not some intellectual, haunted by reflections, but a common pilgrim Makary, who is spiritually the central character of his novel "The Raw Youth" (Podrostok). The ages-old tradition of Russian Orthodox piety perceives the source of that "comeliness" in the church and the liturgy. A believer seeks, consciously or subconsciously, a holy spot on Earth, where the Heaven meets the Earth, the place where "the ladder of Jacob" stands, along which angels ascend and descend. The church is the place of transubstantiation of the world, the beginning of New Jerusalem. This is not an escape from Earth, but a striving for its transfiguration: this is the innermost impulse that has motivated for centuries Russian religious consciousness. This faith is a far cry from false spiritualism, which despises matter and knows nothing of the sanctity of Earth. The idea of the holiness of matter is deeply imprinted in people's mind. Space itself acquires a sacral quality. The interior of a church embodies the idea of harmony of all dimensions of space. It is significant that Russ was able to accept from Byzantium the system of cupolas, surmounted with crosses, which took shape by the 10th century. In the history of world architecture this system expressed in a most perfect way the idea of sacred space, suffused with the creative powers of the Almighty. The beauty of the church, that struck the Byzantine, has been of decisive importance for the formation of the Russian religious character, giving to it its special sacral-aesthetic colour. In religious folklore, churches are often described as shining suns, illuminating Earth

with the light of Divine Grace. Churches are traditionally located on an open spot, so that the power of grace emanating from them could spread in all directions. The architectural forms only indicate the directions of the Divine Energies which hold together the material forces and elements. In this respect the church portrays God, Who as the Maker unites with Himself and with each other the most different nature of beings of the visible and spiritual worlds, "due to which everything moves and exists, without merging or mixing with one another, and no thing contradicts another and is separate from it, although every thing has its own natural properties", forming a common universal harmony. So also the Church "acts in a somewhat similar way: for all who enter it, men, women and children reborn and renewed by the spirit, despite the fact that they all differ from each other in their sex, aspect, age, language, way of life, notions, dignity, occupation, status, skills and abilities, receive from the church in an equal measure the Divine birth and a new Christian name; and when people who are reborn in it are examined in relation to her, all their temporal differences fade away and they comprise one single whole by their faith" (7). Without the sense of this Divine unity, the world falls apart into a number of separate and isolated beings, and man's soul becomes painfully aware of a process of cosmic disintegration and spiritual entropy. There were periods in the history of the Russian Church when church architecture departed from the Byzantine traditions and became secularized, which was especially revealed in the styles alien to Orthodoxy, such as baroque, the Empire and mixed styles. But the idea of the spiritual and invisible church was never extinguished in people's minds. A student of Russian religious folk poetry G. Fedotov noted that the people perceive the most intimate and beautiful embodiment of holiness of the church "more as a system of auditory and olfactory sensations, than visual

ones" (8), that is through singing and the smell of incense. Another powerful factor is the structural division of a church into the sanctuary and the nave (assigned to the laity), which symbolizes the division of the world into the visible and invisible, the spiritual and material worlds, which both form a single whole: "because for those who can see, the contemplative world is all revealed in the sensory world, being mysteriously portrayed in symbols, whereas the sensory world has its foundation in the contemplative world" (9). This profound theological truth, which forms the basis of ontological church symbolism, is perceived as a real force in the depths of a believer's mind, as a force of "the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11.1). This accounts for a special attitude to the church building even on the part of believers who are not aware of the fine details of its symbolism. A purely reflective and reasoning attitude to a religious symbol is a danger sign signalling a decline of spirituality, and as such it has always been regarded as an alien element in Russian religious life. It is rather characterized by an immediate awareness of reality of the spiritual world whose mysteries leave man in a state of reverential amazement. Over the centuries there had emerged a special kind of religious feat on a general cultural scale, the feat of hesychasm, which was expressed in the language of forms, colours and liturgical actions. It was not accidental that Russ was the place where the most unique iconostasis of many tiers was developed in the early 15th century as the visible divide between the two worlds. The iconostasis has more than one function, which can hardly be expressed in conceptual terms. It does both conceal and reveal at one and the same time. It is a wall that hides the greatest of mysteries. This is what people who come to church for the first time often feel, and in this case it serves a useful purpose, wisely teaching them a reverential attitude to the depths of Divine Life. The sensation of a wall separating man from the spiritual world

puts him for the first time before a question of his own true nature, his own and true value and place in the universe. The always wondering gaze is arrested and a person is able to sense for the first time the borders of his spiritual life and its inner potential. In this respect the iconostasis is, above all, the Judgement: it offers an eschatological vision of the Judgement Day, when a human being can see himself in his true nature and becomes aware for the first time of the self-determination of his own life according to his own will: "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (Jn. 3.19). A person begins to realize that because of a falseness of his spiritual life he is excluded from the world of the Divine Light, is left without. In this way the iconostasis puts before a human soul the question about its ultimate fate: shall it be able to pass into a world which is called New Jerusalem in the Apocalypse: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away" (Rev. 21.1). Eschatological problems have traditionally preoccupied Russian religious thought. The picture of the Last Judgement shown by a Greek philosopher to Prince Vladimir, according to the legend, played an important role in making him turn to Byzantine Orthodoxy. From the time of the Baptism of Russ, through the Middle Ages and in the subsequent period, eschatological ideas found a strong response in the religious feeling of the people, enhancing the sense of moral and spiritual responsibility. The iconostasis, which emerged at a time when eschatological awareness reached one of its heights in this country, put a person before the borderline between the earthly and heavenly, teaching him that a union with the Divine can only be achieved per force of spiritual enlightenment and purification of one's moral life.

In this light the purpose of the iconostasis was revealed in a different way. A person began to rea-

lize this: "The iconostasis is a vision. The iconostasis is a revelation of the saints and Angels — "angelophany", the revelation of the heavenly witnesses, and above all of the Mother of God and Christ Himself in the flesh — or witnesses who proclaim to us what is beyond flesh. The iconostasis are the saints themselves. And if all people in the church were sufficiently spiritualized, if their eyes could see, they would see no other iconostasis that God's witnesses standing before the Lord, those who with their faces and their words proclaim His awesome and glorious presence" (10). The iconostasis begins to reveal the pre-eternal meaning and purpose of world history, the true basis of development of mankind. A person ceases to feel himself an insignificant speck of dust carried away by the winds of history. He becomes aware of himself being a meaningful part of a great whole; of the body of Christ. The liturgical feeling always tended to regard the iconostasis as an immediate reflection of the Divine World and regarded its plane as a more meaningful symbolic medium for the embodiment of its ideal. Following the same intuition, icon-painters tried to avoid as much as they could any spacial modelling of their subjects, and the space itself was interpreted in a reverse perspective, which reveals its spiritual energies. The images comprising the iconostasis give us an idea of the extra-spacial world of the Prototypes, which is also attested by the liturgy. The liturgy itself acquires the quality of an icon. The passage of time is slowed down and the sensation of its rapid passage is weakened. This must be the reason for the Russian Orthodox devotion to divine services lasting for hours, because the length of service helps to overcome the feeling of time; being engrossed in prayer, a man gradually changes his attitude to time and instead of measuring it in a spacial-mechanical way, his mind takes him into an area where time has no independent existence. Without prayer a soul has no access to the mystery of Eternity.

The church offers man the proof of his deathlessness. According to St. Maximus the Confessor, church portends the true structure of man in its triplicity: the prothesis is the symbol of the supreme part of man's nature — of the mind, the altar portrays the mystery of the soul and the church itself conveys the image of the body. A man is capable of correct spiritual development only if he has in front of him his own objectivized image. Looking at a church, he can see his own ideal and heavenly prototype which harmoniously combines the spirit, soul and body. This accounts for the tremendous importance of the church building in the history of the Russian Church. Churches are regarded as a pledge of future enlightenment of the world, of the liberation of the creation from the bondage of the powers of death. The sacral space of a church strictly accords to the liturgical division of time, with its imprint of triplicity: it consists of harmoniously intersecting three cycles: the daily, weekly and annual. The use of the notion of a cycle is significant and symbolizes eternity. Prayers of the daily cycle remain the same the year cycle, forming a kind of steadfast foundation for all liturgical life. They help to comprehend the significance of various parts of day and night, and their connection is explained in the names of Vespers, Compline, Midnight Office, Matins, the 1st, 3rd, 6th and 9th Hours and Divine Liturgy (in Russian — *obednya* — the service before mid-day dinner). The prayers of the weekly cycle reveal the mysterious correlation of the days of the week with their spiritual prototypes. The Orthodox Church links every day of the week with its special spiritual significance: on Mondays special prayers are said to the Bodiless Powers, on Tuesday — to St. John the Baptist, on Wednesdays and Fridays — special prayers are said to the Cross, on Thursdays — to the Apostles and St. Nicholas and on Saturdays — to all the saints and for the dead.

The annual cycle has a more complicated structure, in which

every day is related to some special general commemorations.

Whereas the daily cycle is connected with the rhythms of human life, the weekly — with cosmic rhythms, the annual cycle is attuned to the life of the God-Man. It mysteriously elevates the mind to sharing in the events of the life, of Jesus Christ. It is based on the Twelve Apostles which center on Holy Easter and which illuminates with its radiance the whole liturgical year. Holy Easter, which "opens unto us the doors of the Paradise" is the true source of spiritual life, when the heavenly and earthly are seen united by the power of the Risen Lord. He can say that over the centuries ideal ideas have become the focal point of Russian religious life, have been manifested in the splendid and filled with light forms of our churches, they shine in the colours of Rublyov's icons, resound in the Znamenny Chant and have been clearly formulated by Russian philosophers. One of them, I. Fedorov, calls for doing "the common work" of general coparticipation in the cause of raising the dead. V. Soloviev clearly expressed the cosmic aspect of the Resurrection, which he regards as the central event in the history of the universe; this history is nothing but a "constant war ...between the living spirit and dead matter" and finally in the Resurrection Life achieves its decisive victory: "All that is living is preserved in it, and everything mortal is conquered conditionally and finally" (11).

For V. Soloviev the truth of the Resurrection is the truth of faith and reason. He sees it as indispensable in the cosmic evolution: being the decisive victory of Life over Death, of the Positive over the Negative, the Resurrection of Christ is the triumph of reason over the world" (12). This amazing thought is a generalization of ages-old Russian religious experience, which is truly centered on Holy Easter. Tracing its history, one can see how during nearly one thousand years of silence of Russian church thought new ideas emerged and a new order of thought, a new style of spirituality. When the Slavophiles

spoke of comprehensive knowledge that embraces all men and when V. Soloviev wrote about "accomplishing a universal synthesis of science, philosophy and religion... and restoring the perfect inner unity of the contemplative world", that was simply putting into words the impulse which is the mysterious starting point of Russian spirituality with its concrete striving for the ultimate resurrection of all mankind. Popular customs connected with Holy Easter and other Great Church Feasts have been changing over the centuries. Some have been more stable and have been preserved to this day, others are known only to a narrow circle of historians. What has always remained unchanged is the spiritual significance of these feasts, which are experienced as proofs of communion of Christ with men. Many ancient observances create a special atmosphere in the daily life of people, illuminating it with festal radiance. The Easter cakes and eggs are regarded as symbols of new sanctified matter, and their colourful and festal nature reflects the spiritual colours of the feast which are visible only to an enlightened eye. Alongside the Lord's Feasts, a special place in the annual cycle belongs to the Feasts of the Mother of God. It is significant that the start of the ecclesiastical year is marked by the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, and the year ends with the Feast of the

Dormition. People always regarded the Blessed Virgin as the supreme ideal of spiritual and pure life. Whole epochs in the history of the Russian Church bear the sign of special mariocentricity. Back at the time of Prince Yaroslav the Wise there was a tendency of identifying the image of Theotokos with that of St. Sophia the Wisdom of God. This tendency became even more pronounced in the reign of Prince Andrei Bogolyubsky, who introduced the Feast of the Protecting Veil of the Mother of God which recalls the vision of the Blessed Virgin by St. Andrew the Fool-in-Christ in the Blachernae Church in Constantinople during All-Night Vigil. It came as an expression of

the awareness of the constant presence in the world of the "Sophian — Theotokian" force which illuminates people with its radiance.

The establishment of the new feast gave a powerful impetus to the development of associated church construction and iconography. The inexhaustible spiritual content of the image of Theotokos is demonstrated by the really great number of feasts in honour of Her icons. Some of these icons can be traced all through the Russian history, and one example is the Vladimir Icon of the Mother of God which was brought to Kiev from Constantinople in the 12th century and later kept in Vladimir. At the end of the 14th century (1395) it was translated to Moscow as a protection against the hordes of Khan Tamerlane. On the day of the solemn welcome of the icon by the residents of Moscow, the Khan saw in a dream the Virgin, clad in Divine Radiance and surrounded by the Heavenly Host, Who forbade him to attack the city. To the utter amazement of the Muscovites, Tamerlane suddenly ordered his troops to retreat. The second feast in honour of the Vladimir Icon of the Mother of God commemorates the miraculous protection of Moscow from the raid of Khan Akhmat (1472). And the third feast was established in the 14th century. Also of great importance in the history of Russia have been the Smolensk, Tikhvin, Kazan and other icons of the Mother of God. This living process of religious creativity, prompted by the realistic awareness of the spiritual presence of the Blessed Virgin, continues to this day. This concrete nature of religious experience accounts for the unique and unparalleled character of Russian church art, and therein lies the guarantee of its viability and a true hope of its future progress.

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